PENTHOUSE

SEX, SCANDAL & LIBERATION

THE CULTURE WARS

TOBY YOUNG • CLAIRE LEHMANN • MIKE CERNOVICH
DR. DEBRA SOH • JORDAN PETERSON • DENNIS HOF

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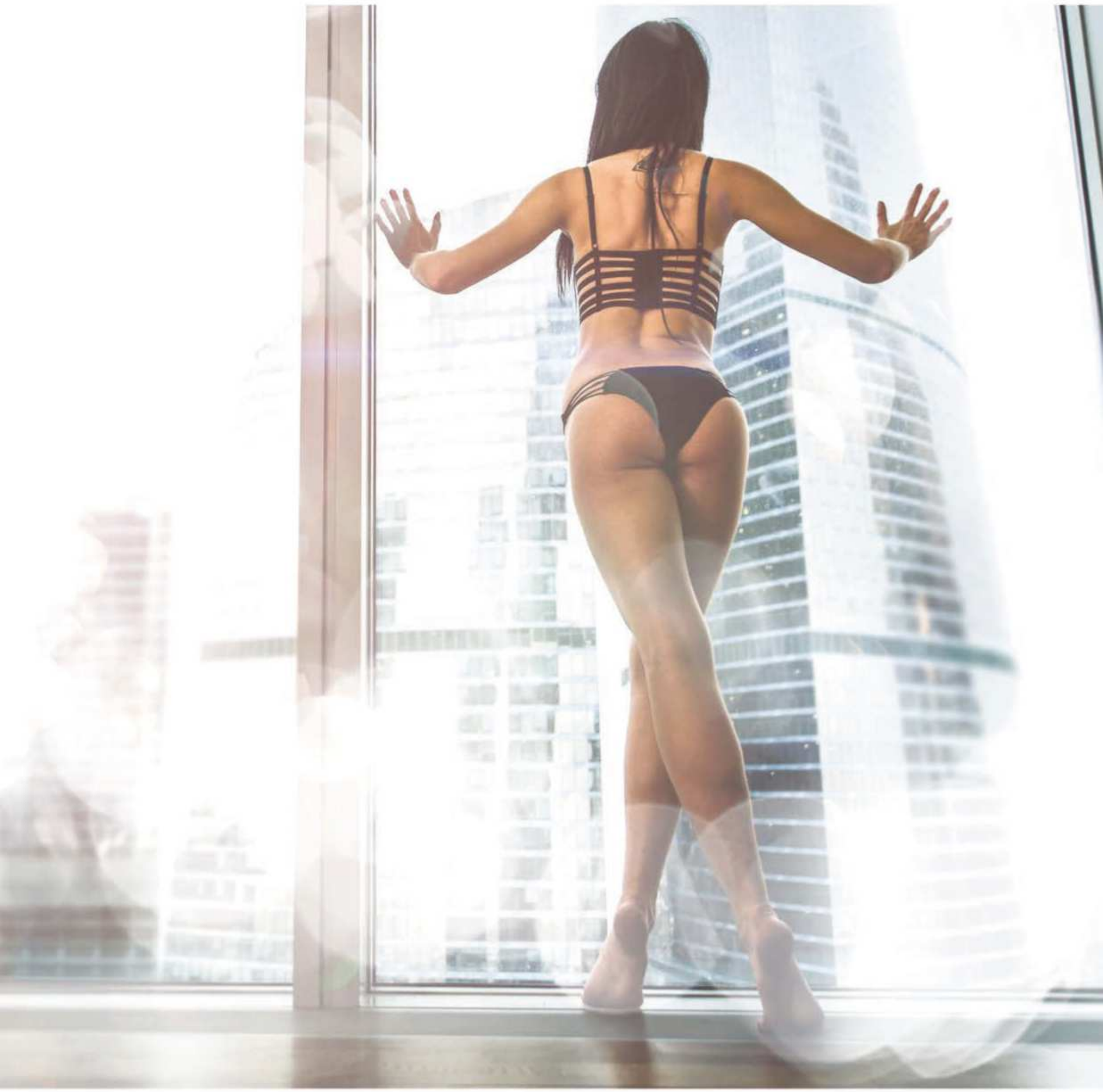

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Penthouse World Media LLC.

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Mish Barber-Way

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Matt Westphalen

SPECIAL GUEST EDITOR
Mitchell Sunderland

MANAGING EDITOR
Sarah Walker

FEATURES EDITOR
Phil Hanrahan

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Crispin Boyer, Joe DeRosa, Alan M. Dershowitz, Michael Hingston, Matt Gallagher, Elle Hardy, Paul James, Claire Lehmann, Zachary Lipez, Leah McSweeney, Jenny Nordbak, Mitchell Sunderland, Art Tavana, Toby Young

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
Victor Gonzalez, Mike Hallquist

FEATURED ARTISTS
Chulaface, Todd Francis, James Silk, Thomas Warming

IMAGE SPECIALISTS
Zack Korn, Christine Bishop

CONTRIBUTORS
Angelo Beltran, Gerald de Behr, Brigham Field, Terri Groves, Hunter James, JT Photography, Jay Mourad, Suss Oldmen, Sahar Yakhi

PRINT PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Victor Gonzalez

NEWSSTAND CONSULTANTS
Willett Associates - Philip & John Willett

CUSTOMER SERVICE
Palm Coast Data
PO Box 420525
Palm Coast, FL 32142
penthouse@emailcustomerservice.com
800-289-7368

EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING OFFICE
8944 Mason Avenue
Chatsworth, CA 91311
310-280-1900

ENTERTAINMENT/ LICENSING OFFICE
8944 Mason Avenue
Chatsworth, CA 91311
310-280-1900
licensing@penthouse.com

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FROM THE EDITOR

I OFTEN fantasize about what would happen if someone pulled the plug on all forms of social media tomorrow. Just all of it completely gone. So many millennial "influencers" would cease to exist. Digital social justice warriors would lose all their power. Everyone would be forced to shut up and listen, instead of sharing, tweeting, talking, and screaming in ALL CAPS at the president. The silence would be amazing. Who knows? As my friend recently predicted, Twitter may go down in the next recession.

America's culture war is real, but we can still laugh at it. When did we all get so uptight? I thought the election of President Trump would have comedy and art all revved up, not sinking in protests and tears, with people declaring that our country is like something out of *The Handmaid's Tale*. Camille Paglia is right: We are on the verge of cultural collapse. But when that collapse will come, who knows? Whatever happens, I know that right now we have to start laughing again, or else we're going to drive ourselves insane. We have to ditch this whole getting-people-we-hate-fired thing that has been all the rage in 2018. Honestly, if social media didn't exist, we wouldn't have half the problems we do.

The point of this issue is to make you think—and hopefully laugh here and there, too. We have provocative work from Claire Lehmann and Toby Young of *Quillette,* Elle Hardy, Art Tavana, and special guest editor Mitchell Sunderland. Topics include political correctness on steroids, Google's diversity policy, "john schools" for fighting prostitution, internet rabble-rouser Mike Cernovich, and Instagram's sexy gun-rights proponents. Plus, there's a tribute to *Penthouse* dear friend and fellow pervert, Dennis Hof. We seem to have forgotten how to forgive in America. Perhaps Hof's story can teach us how to get back there again.

Mish Barber-Way
Executive Editor
whatthefuck@penthouse.com

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WICKED LADY

December Pet of the Month

ALINA LOPEZ

PENTHOUSE®

DECEMBER 2018

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November
Pet of the Month
Ella Silver

MAIL DOMINANCE

I really love the shots of Gianna Dior in the September issue. She mentioned in her interview that she once made love in a tree stand while hunting. As an avid deer hunter here in Wisconsin, I would love to share my tree stand with her. Please let her know she can come hunting with me anytime.

—Steve K., via email

[Ed: I will let Gianna know that if she's craving another tree-stand hunting fuck, then you are ready to rock.]

I just renewed my subscription. Thank you so very, very much. You and your magazine have added so much to my life.

—Tim O., via email

[Ed: Thanks, buddy.]

Your November Pet of the Month Ella Silver is mind-numbingly hot. I've been a fan of her for years, since she first started camming. She is unbeatable.

—K.K., via email

[Ed: Ella Silver is one of those women who is so intimidating at first sight. She's tall and beautiful, like some kind of unicorn. Then she opens her mouth and she's the biggest goofball on the planet. She makes me actually like British people.]

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

GHOST FUCKER

A FEW years back I dated a girl who had the most bizarre fantasy: She wanted to have a threesome with me and…a ghost. It sounds like a joke, and I laughed the first time she told me about it, but when we actually got into it, it was weirdly erotic.

The identity of the ghost changed almost every time. Sometimes it was a famous dead person, other times it was a fictional archetype, like a 1920s mobster or a British duke. Melissa was incredibly creative once she came up with a new character. When we were in the moment, I ignored the "ghost" part and found myself pretending there was another person present. For her, the ghost component was critical.

Melissa resembled a sexy, grown-up Wednesday Addams, with long, straight black hair and piercing blue eyes. Her skin was so pale it looked luminescent in the darkness. She had a filthy mouth and was gloriously uninhibited.

My favorite of her ghost fantasies revolved around a bank robber from the nineteenth-century Wild West. When we did "ghost play," she always started with a séance inviting the person she was picturing to come and join us. She encouraged me to sit back and watch, making me promise to think welcoming erotic thoughts. No problem there.

The séance began with her sitting on the floor completely naked and surrounded by candles in glass jars, like the religious candles you can buy at the gas station. The candlelight flickered on her creamy skin and cast shadows on all her curves.

Then Melissa spread her legs wide and invited the spirit she was imagining to come into her sacred place and share pleasure with us. She moved her hand from her high, tight breasts to her perfect pink pussy, where she parted her folds and slid her fingertips inside just a little before finding her clit. As she started to rub in tiny circles, she rolled her head back and closed her eyes.

"Join us this night, Spirit, and take your pleasure as we will take ours. I seek you, dark criminal of the Old West. I know you are restless and want to take me as you used to take what wasn't yours."

She continued rubbing, moving her fingers in faster and faster circles. Since she wasn't looking at me, I got to sit there and stare, admiring her hard nipples and tiny waist, anticipating the moment when I could finally wrap my hands around that waist and drive my cock into her.

I ACTED LIKE I DIDN'T GET CAUGHT UP IN THE FANTASY, BUT I WAS IMAGINING A PISSED-OFF CRIMINAL DRILLING MY GIRLFRIEND'S ASS AS SHE SUCKED MY COCK.

"I offer you this pussy," she continued, "which is wet and ready for your cock to plunder."

As she said this, she used her other hand to work one finger after another into her pussy. She was now so aroused I could hear the slick moisture as she thrust her fingers in.

"I offer you my throat to fuck as you please. Use me, Spirit. I offer you my ass to spread wide as you thrust your cock into my most secret place. Take me, Spirit."

She moved her ring finger from her pussy to the little rosebud of her ass, pressing until it slid in. Now she was thrusting with two fingers in her pussy and one in her ass.

The first time I saw Melissa's séance, I was too focused on how bizarre it was to really enjoy it. Now that I knew what to expect, I ignored the weirdness and just enjoyed the view. Who gave a fuck if she was morbid, if it also meant she let me watch her masturbate wantonly? I could've suggested her "ghost" was into just about anything and she would've been game.

Her breath came in panting gasps and her hands were moving frantically, about to reach a crescendo. She arched her back and spread her legs wider as she came, moaning deeply, "We welcome you."

Once Melissa had her first orgasm, it was like all the restraints of civilization fell away and she was consumed by pure lust. She wanted to touch and suck and fuck until she was a quivering puddle on the bed. I was always happy to oblige.

Melissa rose from the floor in one movement, jumped onto the bed with me, and climbed on top, with her back facing me. She positioned her ass on my chest and leaned forward, sliding my dick into her mouth without a word.

I knew what she wanted me to do, so I grabbed a dark purple dildo that was on the bed and started to work it into her pussy. She moaned and redoubled her efforts, sucking my cock deeper into her mouth until I was thrusting against her throat.

"He's here, Melissa. And he's fucking your pussy. He's got about a century of pent-up lust, so I hope you're ready for it."

She moaned again, thrusting back against me.

"He's angry that he was caught robbing banks and wants to take it out on your ass."

She reached back with one hand and spread her plump ass cheeks in invitation. I pulled the dildo out of her pussy and poured some lube onto it, although it was so wet that it seemed redundant. I met resistance as I tried to press the head of the toy into her asshole, but she relaxed and I eventually worked it all the way in. She was so excited that she was practically devouring my cock, making it hard to

focus on anything except thrusting the toy into her in long, forceful strokes.

I acted like I didn't get caught up in the fantasy, but in fact I was imagining a pissed-off criminal drilling my girlfriend's ass as she sucked my cock. She came at least three more times before I knew I wasn't going to be able to hold back any longer, so I stopped her. I left the toy inside her, but encouraged her to slide down so she was riding my cock in reverse-cowgirl.

She spread her pussy open and placed the head of my dick at her opening. Once it was lined up, she dropped her weight down, pressing my cock deep inside her. I only had a second to simply enjoy the feeling of her tight, wet pussy wrapped around me before she started to ride me, dropping her weight down so hard her thighs were slapping against my hips.

I took hold of the toy again and used her momentum to make it feel like the Spirit was fucking her ass at the same time. The dildo was big enough that I could feel it pressing against my dick as it slid in and out of her.

She was breathlessly groaning, "Oh, God, yes! Fuck me, fuck me, fuck me! You're both fucking me! Use my holes! I'm your come slut and want to feel you explode inside me! I'm so full! You're spreading me so wide!"

I came while pulling her closer so I could finish deep.

My favorite thing about Melissa is that she didn't give a fuck if I came. She wasn't finished yet, so she kept going, leaving my semi-hard dick inside her and grinding against me, rubbing her clit.

I knew what she needed to finish again, so I said, "He's getting so close to coming, baby. He wants to punish it and finish in your ass, leaving part of himself behind."

I thrusted a little harder and faster with the toy, meeting the speed of the hand she was using on her clit. She came one last time, collapsing against me with the toy still inside her.

I always looked forward to seeing what kind of ghost she would conjure up next.

—Erik J., Phoenix, Arizona

CONTINUED ON PAGE 126

Seeing is believing. When you've had the encounter you've been hoping for, let us know about it! Send your letters to: *Penthouse* magazine, 8944 Mason Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311, or email us at letters@penthouse.com.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY LARSZ

COME TO DADDY

THREE-TITTED FASHION MODELS,
A CHILD-SIRING CORPSE, A BABY TURTLE SEX OFFENDER,
AND OTHER ODDITIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / ORIGINAL PHOTO BY MIKHAIL RESHETNIKOV

THREE BOOBS WALK DOWN A RUNWAY...

THE fashion world is a wonderful place to do idiotic things while pretending it has deep political meaning. For example, at New York Fashion Week last February, models attached sasquatch-sized merkins to their crotches and sashayed down the runway "to represent diversity, uniqueness, and acceptance of individuality with the life-giving human vagina." What it conveyed instead was "the possibility that fashion designers may have way too much time and cocaine on their hands."

In a similarly inane vein, an Italian apparel company called God Can't Destroy Streetwear recently sullied Milan Fashion Week by fitting models with three breasts, which the Huffington Post cautiously suggested were "apparently prosthetic," because it apparently thinks there's a secret cabal of three-titted women, all of whom happen to be gorgeous, waiting in the wings for just such an occasion.

According to designer Giuliano Calza, whose mind bears the sole blame for hatching this idea, having women fitted with tri-breasted racks was some sort of vague statement about the environment and pollution, because as everyone knows, one of the biggest dangers of global warming, apart from turning all the frogs gay, is that women will all suddenly sprout a third knocker only moments before soaring temperatures melt all three boobs right off their ribcages.

Or maybe that wasn't his point. Maybe the point is even dumber than that. Maybe he had no point and was hoping that nobody would notice. Maybe fashion designers should stick to designing clothes and quit pretending that they actually have ideas.

Oh, wait—it also had somethin'-somethin' to do with the film *Total Recall* and the fact that Calza's mom fell victim to breast cancer. Calza attempts to explain in typo-ridden broken English:

"Two years ago my mum had a breast cancer and it was such a wakeup call of what's future gonna be about? So I put all my strength into offering a imaginary world where I could express myself…. Three breasts is not only a *Total Recall* homage but also a political statement. In a moment where culture and art need more feeding than ever, three breast might be useful."

God, are you up there? There's an Italian designer who's corrupting your handiwork by giving fashion models three artificial breasts. He also arrogantly insists you can't destroy his streetwear. Can you please teach him a lesson?

STIFF INSEMINATION

A RIDDLE that has stymied philosophers since the dawn of time is whether it's possible to rape a corpse. As we, the living, know, a corpse can neither give nor deny sexual consent.

By the same morbid reasoning, it's impossible for a dead man to grant permission for anyone to extract semen from his cadaver for the purposes of making a baby.

Now comes word that a U.K. couple ordered a doctor to extract sperm from their dead son, who had perished in a motorcycle accident in 2014. They had it frozen for a year and then shipped it to California, where they instructed physicians to take the thawed-out jizz and use it to create a male fetus. (Gender selection is legal in the U.S. but verboten in England.)

The boy is now three years old and reportedly living with his grandparents across the pond.

Many children around the globe have been born from sperm donated before a person died. This, however, is thought to be the first case in the U.K., and possibly the world, where a child was born from sperm harvested *after* the father died. There is no English law, nor any legal precedent, dictating whether it's okay to withdraw live semen from a dead scrotum. It's actually possible the grandparents could go to prison.

This entire ethical mess reminds us yet again that if you want something from a dead person, the polite thing to do is to *ask* them.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY WHITE MARKERS

G-STRING WELFARE

AMERICA'S welfare system is a much-needed safety net amid the late-capitalism morass that finds the rich getting richer and the poor getting fatter.

Our welfare state is designed (theoretically) to ensure that no one, regardless of how stupid, lazy, or worthless they are, goes without provision for such basic needs as food, shelter, medical treatment, and...lap dances.

Many people think Ohio is a bleak, flat, ugly, postindustrial wasteland that God tucked safely away from the coasts because he didn't want to discourage anyone from moving to America. But Ohio, like all 50 states, has something to offer. For one thing, it offers the quickest route between Pennsylvania and Indiana. If you drive fast enough, you can pass through Ohio without even stopping to pee.

A gentlemen's club in Harrison Township, Ohio, recently had its liquor license revoked after a five-month sting operation revealed that strippers were trading drugs and lap dances for food stamps. The establishment, known as Sharky's—and what gentleman wouldn't want to patronize a club called Sharky's?—must now bear the shame and ignominy of trying to pry dollars from sober men.

You see, over five months, a team of detectives was able to trade $2,000 in food stamps in return for heroin, fentanyl, meth, cocaine, and private dances, possibly not in that order.

To say this is staggering, startling, and shocking is to attempt alliteration that fails because the final word has an "sh" sound rather than an "s" sound. But what group of detectives in their collective right minds spends *five months* visiting a titty bar and only shells out two grand for controlled substances and booties in the face? $400 a month? What the hell, guys? Live a little.

We blow more than 400 clams on a single Wednesday night at Barracuda's, Sharky's main competitor in town.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY A_LESIK

WET DREAMS FOR THE LADIES

BECAUSE we live in a patriarchal society where men die younger and suffer a presumption of guilt in any dispute with women and never get child custody, we all learn in high school biology class that adolescent boys sometimes experience nocturnal emissions, aka wet dreams, which means their brains show them porno movies in their sleep and they wake up in the morning with applesauce all over their jammies.

But we're never told that women have nocturnal orgasms, too. According to one eye-opening study, 40 percent of slumbering women are able to rub one out without ever having to actually rub anything.

Scientists explain that the brain region switched on when a female touches her clitoris can also be activated in a touch-free way. All a woman needs to do is dream about the hot Italian computer repairman who visits her office monthly.

According to women's health expert Dr. Jennifer Wider, sleepgasms may be the result of extra tension built up during waking hours that prevents a woman from seeking release via her own fingertips (or from the handsome Italian computer repairman).

"One study from several decades ago reported that women who have nocturnal orgasms may also be experiencing stress and anxiety," says Wider. "Orgasms in both men and women can relax a person and help aid their sleep patterns."

Another study from 1983—why is no one researching this today, hmmm?—found that during a sleepgasm, a woman's heart rate doubles, she breathes 22 times per minute instead of a dozen times, and the blood flow to her vagina increases so much that her nether regions become as swollen as a baboon's ass.

The study didn't actually mention anything about a baboon's ass, but you probably already knew that.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY FOTODUKI

LEGENDARY SWORDSMAN CROAKS DURING COITUS

WHEN used to describe Spanish-speaking people, the word "Latino" is grossly inaccurate for two reasons: 1) They don't speak Latin. 2) Latin came from Italy, not Spain.

Now that we've cleared that up, Latin lover Maurizio Zanfanti was known as "Italy's most famous playboy," and he recently died doing what he loved best: fucking.

Zanfanti, aka the "Romeo of Rimini," had famously swung his dick around the Italian beachside town since the 1970s when he was first hired at age 17 to use his good looks and hairy chest to entice women into a nightclub called Blow Up.

He estimated that during a good summer, he was able to bed 200 gorgeous female tourists, and for those of you who are really shitty at math, that's more than two ladies per day.

Over his career as pussy bait for the Italian hot spot, Zanfanti claims to have screwed 6,000 women. Those aren't Wilt Chamberlain numbers, but they're impressive nonetheless—and according to statistics, that is roughly 5,993 more partners than the average American male gets to enjoy in his lifetime. We're not talking about you—we don't even know you. For all you tell your friends, you could have had sex with far more than seven women.

Shaggy-haired Zanfanti spent winters in Scandinavia, where his sexual prowess was so appreciated that a group of his female conquests in a small Swedish town chipped in to erect (heh) a statue in his honor.

In 2014, Zanfanti gave an interview to the German newspaper *Bild* claiming that his days as a professional Lothario were over. At age 59, he said he was getting too old to keep rutting like a horny goat.

He lied.

Zanfanti, 63, expired of a heart attack while slippin' the salami to a 23-year-old tourist at his estate. His horrified partner called paramedics, but it was too late.

It's almost as if Tom Brady had died throwing a football.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY JET CAT STUDIO

BLADDER BUMMER

HAVE you ever been in the throes of sexual ecstasy, hotly entwined with your lover, reaching new heights of carnal pleasure and genital euphoria, only to get the nagging feeling that you need to immediately dismount and go pee?

A recent study from the sex-toy company Pure Romance asked men and women what they feared most about cavorting between the sheets. For men, it was the quite justified (but funny) dread of impotence and premature ejaculation.

Big fears among women included body image and smelling bad. But topping the list for the ladies was the nagging need to urinate during sex.

In one of God's cruel jokes, he put all the fun stuff and the disgusting stuff together around the same place. A woman's clitoris, bladder, and asshole are so close they might as well be roommates. And sometimes her wires and signals can get crossed to the point where genital pleasure is confused with the itch to go wee-wee. If a guy is sufficiently endowed and starts hitting all her spots from different angles, there's the possibility he might accidentally put pressure on her bladder.

Although physicians generally agree that if a woman is not filled with liquids to the point of bursting, and doesn't have a weakened pelvic floor, there's very little chance she'll accidentally pee during sex, it's still wise to empty the bladder before intercourse.

Either that, or she should pee on her mate and just tell him that she's extra excited. He probably won't be able to tell the difference anyhow.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY PAIR SRINRAT

HIGH HORNINESS

A COMMON negative stereotype about marijuana is that not only does it make you stupid and fat, it kills the sex drive of both genders. There have even been reports going back to the 1970s claiming that excessive marijuana use among males can boost their estrogen levels and give them tiny breasts.

However, a pair of studies turns this myth on its head and reveals it to be a bunch of hogwash, poppycock, balderdash, and flapdoodle.

One new study, from Stanford University, surveyed a whopping 50,000 men and women and found that marijuana doesn't impede libidos, it enhances it. According to researcher Michael Eisenberg:

"Frequent marijuana use doesn't seem to impair sexual motivation or performance. If anything, it's associated with increased coital frequency."

And according to another study, published in *The Journal of Sexual Medicine,* 68 percent of women who used weed prior to sex reported that they found sex more pleasurable as a result. That's two out of three women; we're assuming the third woman also needs some cocaine.

But back to the fellas for a second. Alcohol's effect on male sexual performance is so notoriously negative that most people have heard of "whiskey dick." There's also "coke dick," where the penis shrivels up and hides inside the body like a scared ferret. The latest research, however, strongly suggests there is no such thing as "marijuana dick." So keep puffing and keep fucking—the only thing you have to lose is what you paid for the weed.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY ALEYNIKOV PAVEL

DECEASED TURTLE REMOVED FROM LADY PARTS

MANY of us have partied to excess, conked out, and awakened groggy and hungover, greeted by the sight of sex partners we don't remember meeting at the bar. Or we've peeked out the window in the morning to see our car grill is as smashed as we were when we went to bed. Or we've gotten tattoos on our buttocks that say "MOTHER."

But if you, dear woman reader, have never wound up in an emergency room with a dead turtle in your vagina, we'll have to consider you a lightweight.

Such was the fate of an unnamed 26-year-old British woman vacationing on Tenerife, the largest of the Canary Islands. She went into an emergency room complaining of pain in her genital area. She could only recall that she'd been partying the night before on a nearby beach, but beyond that, all details were fuzzy.

Upon examination, the physician found that the woman's vagina contained a dead baby Chinese pond turtle. We don't note that it was a Chinese pond turtle to be racist in any way, but facts are facts. We are not implying that Chinese pond turtles are any more prone to entering British women's vaginas than any other nationality of turtle, so please cease questioning our motives here.

The doctor concluded that there was no way the turtle could have gotten inside the woman's vagina by itself—it had to have been inserted by the woman or by someone else the night before. If anything, the baby turtle was likely terrified to find itself inside a dark and scary human womb. And to be fair here, the *woman* didn't die, but the turtle *did*. We feel the need to explain all of this to hopefully avert the possibility that you'll call us racists for noting that the turtle just so happened to be Chinese.

The woman is possibly the victim of a sexual assault but has declined to press charges. Police continue to investigate and are, we presume, interviewing all Chinese turtles in the area.

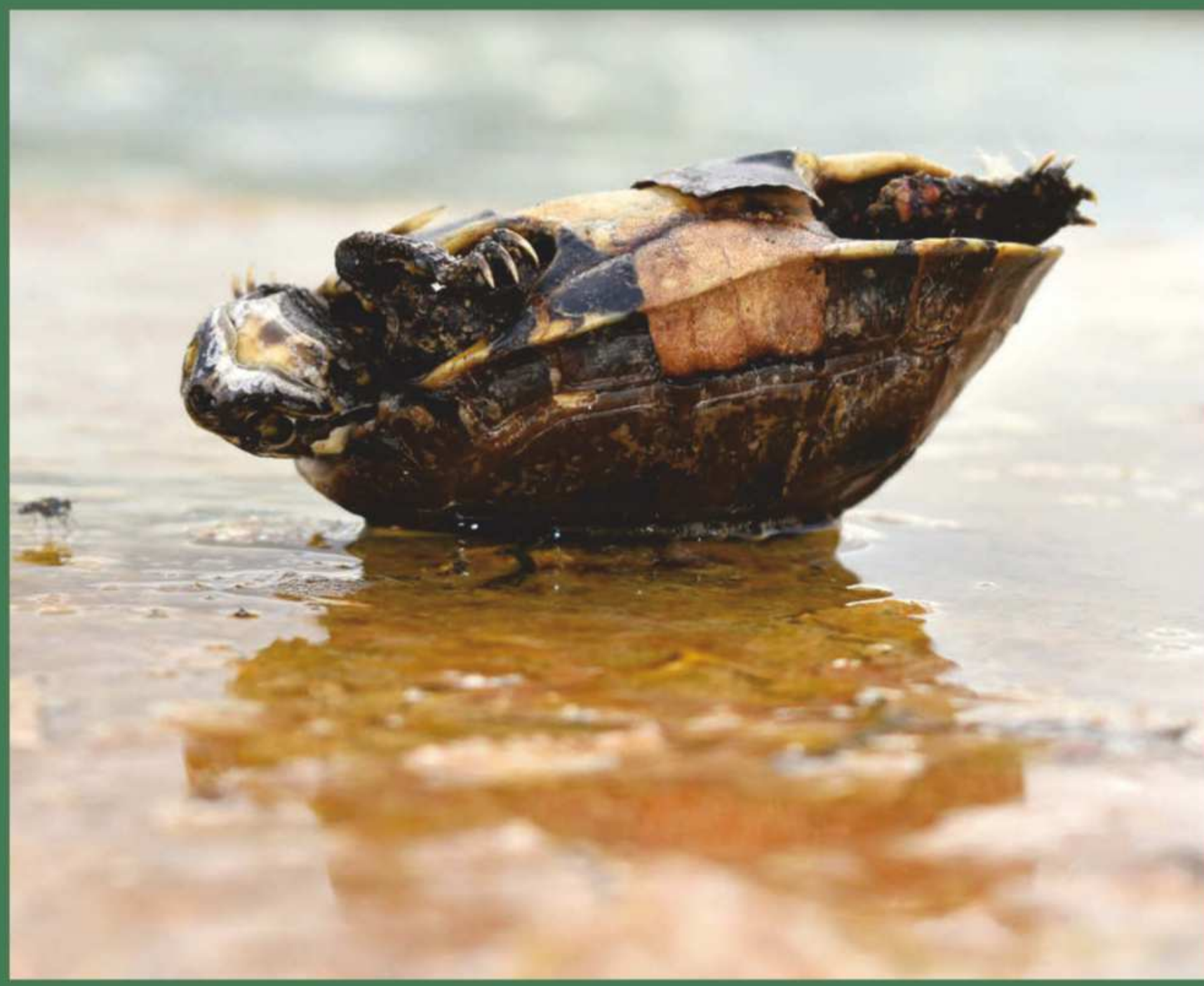

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY MR. PRASIT BOONMA

HARD TO PEG

THREE DIRECTORS WHOSE WORK DEFIES EASY POLITICAL LABELS.

BY PAUL JAMES

ITS inability to attract big-name celebrity star power is one of the few areas where the Republican Party has consistently lagged behind the Democrats. Where the left gets to claim support from Oprah Winfrey, Ben Stiller, Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon, George Clooney, and Brad Pitt–basically anyone spoofed in *Team America: World Police* as a liberal member of the "Film Actors Guild" (aka "F.A.G.")–the right has to make do with straight-to-streaming stars like Kevin Sorbo and Antonio Sabàto Jr., past-their-prime conservative converts like James Woods and Jon Voight, and off-their-meds outliers like Roseanne Barr and Kanye West.

Directors, however, especially the ones who've been navigating the Hollywood system for decades, often have a funny way of defying easy categorization. All kinds of big-time filmmakers who have probably never voted for a GOP candidate in their lives have–sometimes accidentally–made movies with messages that Republicans adore. (Ron Howard, for instance, may be a self-proclaimed Democrat, but he's also the guy who adapted not one but three Dan Brown novels for the big screen.)

Here are three other prime examples of directors who have managed to straddle both sides of the culture wars.

ALL PHOTOS: FROM SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / CLINT EASTWOOD BY LEV RADIN / OLIVER STONE BY VALLTER / STEVEN SPIELBERG BY DFREE BY TAMMY REED

CLINT EASTWOOD

Eastwood is undeniably one of the right's biggest pop culture icons. "Go ahead…make my day"–a garbled version of a line Eastwood spoke in 1983's *Sudden Impact*–has been adopted by supporters of "stand your ground" statutes, and even President Reagan quoted it as a way of underlining his plans to veto any and all Congressional attempts to increase taxes. The 88-year-old director denounced President Obama from the stage at the 2012 Republican National Convention, and favored John McCain during his 2008 presidential bid.

But Eastwood's on-screen politics are harder to pin down. Critic Pauline Kael famously denounced the Dirty Harry series as fascist. On the other hand, his biographer Richard Schickel claims the film Eastwood felt the greatest personal attachment to was his 1980 flop *Bronco Billy,* in which he plays the manager of a traveling circus troupe that serves as a shelter for ex-convicts, hippies, army deserters, and other conservative undesirables. He's made movies that prop up the myth of the Old West gunslinger (*The Good, The Bad and the Ugly*), but many others, like *Unforgiven,* ruthlessly tear that myth down.

He's made *Flags of Our Fathers,* which honors the patriotic men of the U.S. Marine Corps, then just three months later, he turned around and released *Letters From Iwo Jima,* which compassionately presents the perspective of the Japanese enemy during the same events. It's not surprising that one of the best critical takes on Eastwood's work is titled *Persistence of Double Vision*.

OLIVER STONE

Part East Coast preppie, part Purple Heart-awarded Vietnam vet, and part drugged-up seventies dropout freak, Oliver Stone assembled one of the more singular filmographies of the eighties and nineties, churning out bold and ambitious "epic visions of America" at an insane clip of more than a film per year. He was here to tell moviegoers, often at lengths of three-plus hours, that the Vietnam war was a tragedy (*Platoon, Born on the Fourth of July*), that the government is lying to you (*JFK, Nixon*), that corporate greed is undermining the nation (*Wall Street*), and that, yes, Jim Morrison is one of the great poets of the twentieth century (*The Doors*).

Lately, though, Stone's stances on world events have softened. People expecting *World Trade Center* to be another stew of conspiracy theories and hallucinatory imagery instead got a surprisingly low-key tribute to the bravery of the 9/11 first responders. People hoping *W.* would give George W. Bush one last kick in the pants before he left office instead got a sympathetic take on a simple man bullied around by a stern father and a heartless vice president. Nowadays, Stone seems content jetting around the world conducting equally credulous interviews with Fidel Castro and Vladimir Putin.

STEVEN SPIELBERG

Spielberg is one of Hollywood's most high-powered Democrat fund-raisers, and has taken on a long string of film projects that promote solid liberal values. Few fiction films portray the horrors of fascism and anti-Semitism more vividly than *Schindler's List,* while *Amistad* and *Lincoln* document two of the nation's most significant early civil rights battles and *The Post* celebrates the press's role in exposing the lies of the Nixon administration. Even the less overtly political *Minority Report* smuggles in a warning about the dangers of government surveillance run amok.

At the same time, it's no accident that Spielberg enjoyed his greatest commercial success during the 1980s. Between the childlike affection he shows for middle-class suburbia (*E.T.*) and his politically uncomplicated nostalgia for the 1940s (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*)–not to mention his immense commercial success–he was the perfect Reagan-era filmmaker. *Saving Private Ryan* did more to cement the notion of "the greatest generation" than any other work of art. When Trump promises to "make America great again," this is the image he's evoking.

Paul James is a playwright, editor, broadcaster, and a film and pop culture commentator for CBC Radio, Salon, and Eighteen Bridges magazine. He is the cohost of the podcast Trash, Art & the Movies. Follow him on Twitter @myelbow

DOES ANYONE HERE NEED THEIR CARPETS CLEANED?
Todd Francis

MEET THE NEW WAR, SAME AS THE OLD WAR

A MUSIC PERSPECTIVE ON AMERICA'S CULTURAL HEAD-BUTTING.

BY ZACHARY LIPEZ

PITY the rookie combatants in today's culture wars. It can't be easy to join a battle that's been waged since before they were born and think it's new.

I'm talking about free-speech warriors in neatly pressed Fred Perrys and unscuffed boots, collecting their "blocked by" Twitter designations like medals and howling their God-given right to make rape "jokes." All the young dudes hoping history will judge the videogames they play to be as cool as rock 'n' roll. A cohort of guys who, when they're no longer young, seconds from sliding toward the great apolitical beyond, will—like dying Confederate soldiers picturing their mothers' faces—envision Eminem himself laying a cooling hand upon their wrinkled foreheads.

As a veteran of music's culture wars, I remember Tipper Gore's denunciation of both the Dead Kennedys and Prince back in the eighties. It was alarming. Moreover, I've been engaging in lengthy arguments in defense of some sketchy black metal since the 1990s. I like to think, then, that my take on these rookies—the boys who are proud—has more behind it than the jerk of a knee.

If you've never heard of Hollywood's Hays Code (puritanical censorship of movie sexuality), or Fredric Wertham's 1954 book *Seduction of the Innocent* (comic books create juvenile delinquents, it argued), or the hysteria about jazz ("It's the music of drug-using Negroes!"), which was followed by hysteria about rock 'n' roll, disco, porn, punk, Dungeons & Dragons, heavy metal, hip-hop, and more, then yes, it must seem like we're living in very combative times indeed. And we are! But no more so than any other. It only feels that way if you're a person who really, really wants to wear that Burzum shirt onstage, or thinks that any episode of the new *Roseanne* past the second one was funny.

Maybe we're at war, maybe we're not. Far be it from me to diminish anyone's heroic narrative. But this idea that cultural clashing has our country doomed? C'mon, it took almost 200 years for Rome to fall. Unless America peaked in 1812 (and you think Tchaikovsky's famous overture was about the British burning the White House, when it was about Napoleon in Russia), we should be okay at least until the end of Radiohead's album cycle.

I have perspective—and not because I'm a nerd. While I wear glasses and have weird breath, I'm not really smart enough to be a proper nerd. I'm using the broader, original definition of the word, the one that means being good at science and math, as opposed to being a guy who worships mass-media franchises like *Star Wars* so much he'll send death threats over casting. But I'm nerdy enough to have a passing interest in the last hundred years of popular culture and, baby, let me tell you, it was turbulent.

Comedian Lenny Bruce and crooner Frank Sinatra (pre-Republican version) both got fucked with. There were laws against dancing that are still on the books.

Weird as it may seem in a world where all moms have terrible tattoos, I remember a time when a mohawk and ripped shirt could get you beaten within an inch of your life. What made it especially wild was that, for the most part, the culture wars were fought by artists, African-Americans, and gays on one side, and organized religion and the truncheon-wielding state on the other.

It wasn't until the disco backlash—where rockers and long-hairs across the country, forgetting that Little Richard himself once sang about anal sex, waged a record-burning war on the infernal blackness/gayness of this glittery dance music—that sectors of the general population took the initiative. But by 1985, Tipper Gore and the Parents Music Resource Center had restored the gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair about bumping-uglies representation in art to its rightful, bureaucratic place: Washington, D.C.

In the 1990s, with the popularization of the term "political correctness," we witnessed harbingers of today's culture wars. Fugazi and their ilk bummed out thousands of punks by demanding they do less shoving of strangers at their shows. That the prerogative to take a running jump from a stage prior to crashing on someone's

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY DIMITRIS_K

head would be seen as a cultural imperative might arguably be considered fucking insane, but then again, "go my own way" non-neighborliness, "don't tread on me" politics, and, for that matter, states' rights are as much a part of the American identity as the Freedom March.

That strain of solipsistic individualism won the frontier West, and pointing out the human cost to this expansion is pure sissydom, they argue, so you can understand why so many young men hated Bikini Kill. It's like those bitches hated fun.

Somehow, despite the reign of politically correct terror, nu metal and Vice still happened, so maybe, just maybe, the dour cultural killjoys weren't as powerful as some put-upon dudes thought.

Or maybe the "culture wars" are not, in fact, wars; they're just culture. Nobody wins or loses, and the sides overlap. It's just the push-and-pull and cyclical noise we all make together.

In fairness, I should acknowledge that friends and peers of a more–*cough*–libertarian bent make an (occasionally) potent argument that, in the year of our Lord 2018, leftists have taken over the government's role as art- and freedom-haters. They argue that not *everything* has to be political, and that uptight, indoctrinated squares are constantly rallying their online mobs to crush any art or opinions that stray from (cultural Marxist) orthodoxy.

I don't disagree that perpetual outrage can be a hell of a drug, and, of course, some people really are just puritans–in the thirties, they'd have been Stalinists–but I just can't muster the rhetorical reach to equate hard-rock band Black Pussy losing shows in Portland because of their name with, say, President George H. W. Bush denouncing Ice-T's band Body Count for "Cop Killer." The difference in power dynamics is just too vast.

It maybe doesn't help that some of the most strident voices railing against social justice warriors are people like Brett Kavanaugh's conservative crony Mark Judge, a sometime music writer who, while denouncing a fellow music writer's argument against cultural appropriation, bizarrely referenced Sonic Youth's novelty side-project, Ciccone Youth.

As with most situations in our time of degraded discourse, it's the dummies and dullards who get the most clicks, so it's easy enough to find examples of pure inanity on both sides. (Yes, I can think of examples of said dummies on my side of the fracas, but I'm not going to name them because they're hella embarrassing.)

But "idiots on both sides" is not the same as "very fine people on both sides."

While I like a bit of nuance now and again, if your beef is in exact accordance with that of the state–in other words, you view your opponents as mouthy, marginalized miscreants shitting in capitalism's punch bowl–you're perhaps not the free-speech underdog you imagine yourself to be.

It's been a rough few months for those staring back at me from across the field of cultural combat. Two bands not exactly noted for their liberal uptightness, Texas thrashers Power Trip and New York hatecore pioneers Sheer Terror, have both publicly stated that Proud Boys are not welcome at their shows. I don't imagine it's fun when musicians you've delusionally decided share your worldview want nothing to do with your eternal crybabyness. Culture war is hell when metalheads and skinheads both agree that you're too evil to live and too corny to kill.

At least the alt-right can take some comfort in the fact that the army, police, and every branch of government is in their corner. It must be nice to know that, in this grand clash of civilizations, this Custer-like "last stand" against dark-skinned *Star Wars* cast additions–not to mention rappers who decry your use of the N-word even though they use it, and comic book-ruining feminazi hordes–the Enabler in Chief in the White House has a shit-ton of guns and will wait outside the show in case you get picked on in the mosh pit.

A comfort, for sure, but one that hardly makes for a sexy T-shirt.

Zachary Lipez is a writer and bartender in New York City. He is the author (with collaborators Stacy Wakefield and Nick Zinner) of "131 Different Things."

DR. DEBRA SOH

DEBRA Soh, a 28-year-old Canadian neuroscientist and sex researcher, saw her public profile climb last May when she was included in a *New York Times* article highlighting a group of bold, dogma-challenging intellectuals, academics, scientists, and cultural commentators. Titled "Meet the Renegades of the Dark Web," the piece, by Bari Weiss, became a culture-wars lightning rod, bashed and saluted on social media. Along with Soh, the rebels included Jordan Peterson, Sam Harris, and Christina Hoff Sommers. Joe Rogan, on the strength of his interview podcast, and comedian Dave Rubin, thanks to his free-thinking YouTube channel, also made the roster.

"If you produce findings that the public doesn't like, you can lose your job," Soh told Weiss, referring to today's walking-on-eggshells environment for researchers, not least in her charged field, sexology.

And with the politics of gender and sexuality even more fraught in academia, Soh decided to leave life as a university researcher to write and speak freely, using her expertise to counter perspectives that might fit some ideological agenda but are not supported by science.

Today Soh writes about sexuality, biological differences between men and women, free speech, political correctness, and more, contributing to an impressive range of publications, from North American newspapers to *Harper's, Scientific American,* and *Playboy*.

"I've stopped censoring myself," she tells *Penthouse*. "I used to worry that things I say might alienate some people, but I've realized I can't live like that. We should be able to speak about facts and the truth without fear of being punished for it."

Recently, Soh has criticized the way coverage of topics such as gender differences and transgenderism has been politicized, leading to nonscientific viewpoints. In her columns, in conversations with Rogan and Rubin on their hugely popular shows, and elsewhere, Soh has also exposed weaknesses in the assumptions and operations of corporate and academic diversity policies, such as those in place at Google and Harvard University.

"There is a long history of transgender activists going after sex researchers if a scientist produces findings that activists don't like," Soh points out. "I left academia [so] I could defend what the science says, particularly about children who are gender-dysphoric [who feel they were born in the wrong body]. The majority of these kids will outgrow their feelings by puberty, which is considered a controversial subject in today's climate."

"I take a lot of pride in having been a sex researcher," Soh adds. "My colleagues should be able to do their work without having to deal with activists' bullying and intimidation."

Besides hosting her own popular podcast, Wrongspeak, alongside author, editor, lawyer, and ex-engineer Jonathan Kay, Soh is developing new projects for 2019, but her lips are sealed. Meanwhile, she'll continue to expose the ways political correctness and academic leftism are interfering with scientific progress and cogent debate.

Despite being regularly attacked by activists on Twitter, Soh feels optimistic.

"I see a backlash to political correctness coming," she says. "We saw it with the 2016 election, and I see more on the way, because people are understandably fed up."

PHOTO COURTESY OF DEBRA SOH

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DAD OF THE MOMENT

JORDAN PETERSON

BY MISH BARBER-WAY

PHOTO COURTESY OF JORDAN PETERSON

I WAS recently labelled "fash" (that's English hipster speak for "fascist") because I "liked" a few of Jordan Peterson's tweets.

For those of you who've been living under a rock the past year, Peterson is a 56-year-old Canadian psychology professor who rocketed to fame on a launch path that began with his 2016 videos debating Bill C-16.

Peterson was rallying against new Canadian legislation (which has since become a law) that says anyone who does not call a trans person by their preferred pronoun can be legally punished. Peterson objected to the bill on free-speech grounds, which enraged transgender activists and progressive lefties, who called for his resignation and stormed the University of Toronto campus, accusing him of every thought-crime they could think of.

But their attempts at silencing him backfired. In fact, the protests helped Peterson become a North American political sensation. *The New Yorker* profiled him, a much-discussed *New York Times* article featured him as part of the Intellectual Dark Web, and Peterson soon found himself debating politics, religion, and culture with public intellectuals like Ben Shapiro, Sam Harris, Dave Rubin, and Camille Paglia. He also famously jousted about workplace feminism with English TV reporter Cathy Newman in a 30-minute interview so potent it has attracted more than eight million YouTube views.

Peterson's latest book, *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos,* is a best seller that sent him on a sold-out world book tour. Young men have flocked to Peterson and his message of love, independence, and personal responsibility. Still, the left sees him as an evil, sexist, transphobic monster hiding under the guise of free speech to push his "fash," "alt-right" ideas. The best part about most of Peterson's critics is that they are too dumb and lazy to read his book before barking their pathetic criticisms.

Because if they did read *12 Rules for Life* or bothered to listen to some in-depth interviews with the man, they would see that Peterson isn't some tyrannical right-wing pundit—he's a classic liberal, a Canadian from the rural prairies, a teacher, a scholar, and a family man who loves his kids so much he gave up eating everything but meat and greens to help his daughter with her potentially fatal autoimmune disorder.

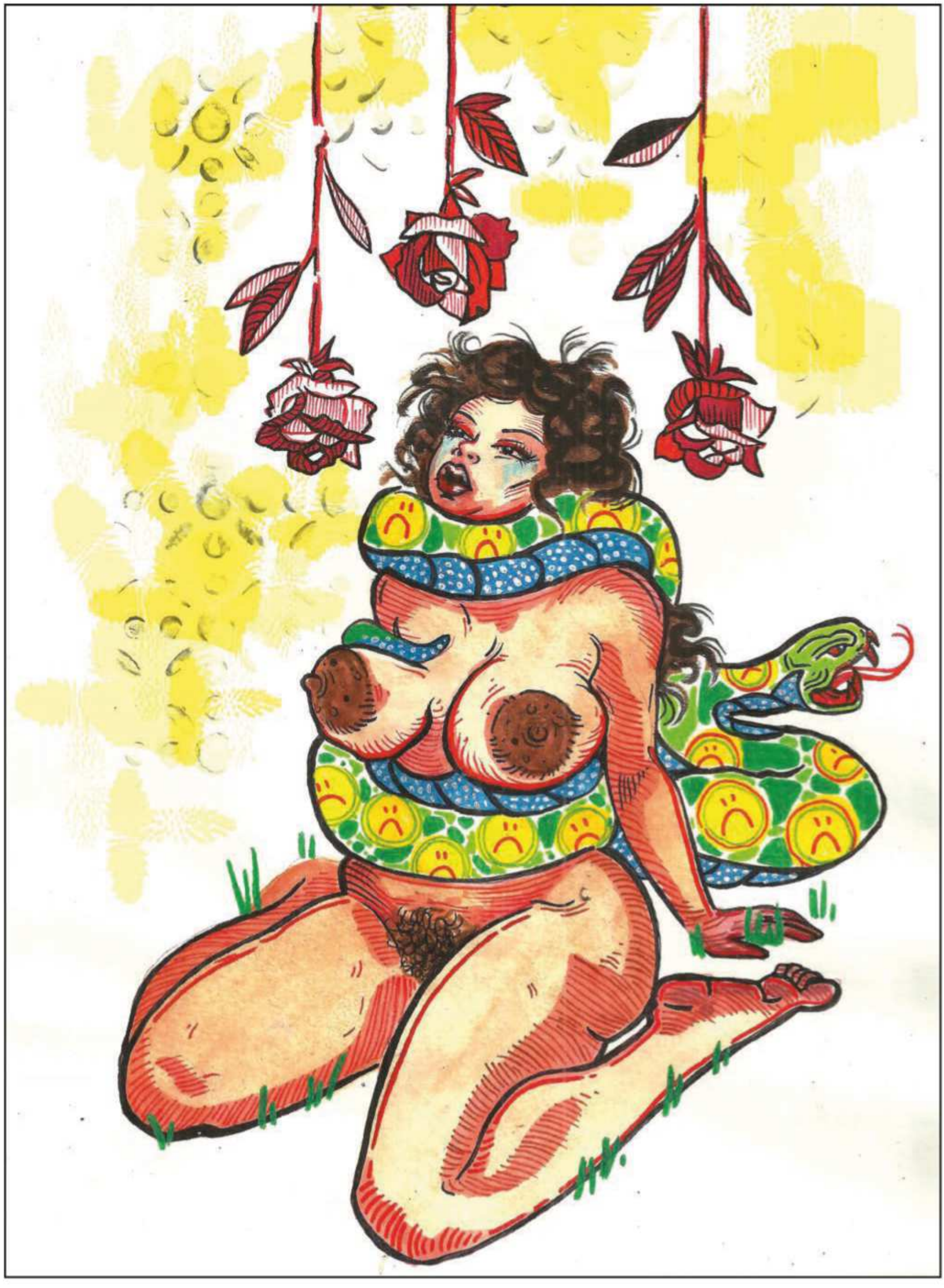
Like a great father, Peterson doesn't want to give you a fish. He wants to teach you to fish, so you can eat fish forever. Then he wants you to know what could happen if you fish too often and understand the consequences your potential overfishing could have on the world.

12 Rules for Life is a self-help book for young men that promotes a conscious, respectful version of masculinity, one reinforcing universal truths such as "we are not equal in ability or outcome, and never will be," and "your misery is the weapon you brandish in your hatred for those who rose upward while you waited and sank."

In today's ultra-PC climate, notions like these have been lost and replaced with identity-politics groupthink and victim terminology. So for many of us, Canada's greatest dad has been a breath of fresh air.

Peterson wants young people to take responsibility for themselves as individuals, to become informed about the world, and to create meaning in their lives so that they can be fulfilled and contribute positively to society.

If that's what fascism means to the kids today, then I guess, yes, I'm a "fash." I'm a big, fat fascist. Thanks, Dad!



REVOLUTIONARY WAR:
JUST CAUSE 4
SQUARE ENIX (XBOX ONE, PS4, PC)

LET the *Battlefield* games portray war as hell. In *Just Cause 4,* war is hilarious. The franchise has always celebrated the chaos of anything-goes gameplay in a sandbox world, and this latest installment ups the ludicrousness. You once again play as Rico Rodriguez, suave secret agent fomenting unrest in a banana republic full of weapons depots and oil refineries just begging to be blown up. Stealing cars, jets, helicopters, and boats is about the most boring thing you'll do here.

Your antihero is equipped with a grappling gun, parachute, and wingsuit that, when used together properly, facilitate some of the silliest moments in gaming. Grappling enemies to vehicles is bush-league improvisation. Your standard weapons come with a hardware store's worth of attachments that add another layer of unpredictability to your assaults. Fasten balloons and boosters to a hot-dog cart, for instance, and you've just salvaged your own bomber aircraft. Transform ordinary light poles and radar towers into catapults. Bungee balloons and wind-generating turbines to enemy tanks or soldiers, then stand back and admire the mayhem. There is method to your madness: The more chaos you inflict, the more insurgents you'll enlist in your cause.

Of course, you can also just hijack an F-15 Strike Eagle or an Apache gunship if you'd rather not use your DIY armada. You'll need these speedier craft just to traverse the landscape. Everything just screams *more* and *bigger*. Based on South America, the world features four distinct biomes—deserts, grasslands, alpines, and rainforests—with their own frightful weather, and you can actually wield natural disasters as weapons. Install titanic wind machines to steer tornadoes into enemy lines. Bring avalanches down on enemy convoys. Commandeer an armored storm-chasing car to drive through hurricane-force winds that scatter pursuers. *Just Cause 4* will appeal to every player type in the cultural spectrum, from social-justice warriors to gung-ho bros to Weather Channel nerds.

UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE: GAMES THAT SLAY IN NOVEL WAYS

> 4 <

SHADOWS: AWAKENING
(KALYPSO MEDIA, PS4, XBOX ONE, PC)

Hitting at just the right moment for loot-starved players jonesing for *Diablo*-style dungeon crawling, *Shadows: Awakening* offered a totally metal twist to the action-RPG formula. Instead of a party of characters as in most role-playing games, you control a demon who can morph into multiple characters as well as hop between the mortal realm and a hellish shadow plane.

> 3 <

INSURGENCY: SANDSTORM
(FOCUS, HOME INTERACTIVE, PS4, XBOX ONE, PC)

Absolute realism trumps gung-ho fantasy in this first-person shooter created for gamers who crave a depiction of modern combat that could inflict post-traumatic stress. The heads-up display doesn't have a health bar, map, or even an ammunition counter. Your arsenal of modern weapons is suitably realistic—and deadly—based on true-to-physics ballistics.

> 2 <

EARTH DEFENSE FORCE 5
(D3 PUBLISHER, PS4)

When you don't have an entire weekend to mobilize a *Call of Duty* or *Just Cause* campaign, *Earth Defense Force 5* is the perfect low-time investment, high-frag return. In this case, you're blowing up insectile aliens—and human doppelgangers—in more than a hundred fast-moving missions you can play solo or with a couch-potato comrade in split-screen co-op.

> 1 <

CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS 4
(ACTIVISION, PS4, XBOX ONE, PC)

If you're sick of the historical hooey of most war-themed shooters, this sequel cuts to the chase and delivers unadulterated multiplayer-only combat in war zones from every era—including a fictional zombie apocalypse. Players can choose from four distinct gunmen with customizable skills based on their killing sprees.

RIP *By James Silk*

HIP-HOP POP

HOW THE RAP INDUSTRY SHOOK UP A FLAT SODA BRAND.

BY MICHAEL HINGSTON

EVERYONE has a dream. Even advertisers. If you're a budding copywriter, chances are you dream of one day writing a campaign as attention-grabbing as Nike's recent surprise spot featuring Colin Kaepernick. Another of those industry big dogs is Coca-Cola and its beverage empire, and every year scores of new, hungry graduates try to land jobs there.

But in 1991, during one of the company's routine recruitment sessions, an MBA student named Darryl Cobbin turned heads when he told recruiters he wasn't all that interested in the Coca-Cola account. No, Cobbin had his sights on one of the brand's less-glamorous products: Sprite.

Why? Well, partly because of the challenge. At the time, Sprite was responsible for just three percent of Coca-Cola's overall sales. The product was still saddled with outdated terminology like "lymon" (a clunky portmanteau combining "lemon" and "lime"), and its primary market was mothers and young children. Cobbin wanted to change that, and in a big way. He wanted Sprite to go after teenagers, one of the core demographics for beverage companies, by aligning it with the values and aesthetics of hip-hop.

SPRITE WAS ONE OF THE FEW BRANDS THAT WAS WILLING TO DIP ITS TOE IN THE WATERS OF RAP, WITH PAST COMMERCIALS FEATURING KURTIS BLOW, HEAVY D, AND KID 'N PLAY.

And that's the other reason Sprite actually made sense for Cobbin's vision. It was one of the few brands that had been willing to dip its toe in the waters of rap, with past commercials featuring Kurtis Blow, Heavy D, and Kid 'n Play. These efforts had proven successful in African-American and Latino communities, at least relative to their modest budgets. Cobbin was betting there was plenty more where that came from. He got the job.

It might have seemed like an odd pairing. After all, there wasn't any inherent connection between lemon-lime soda and hip-hop. But Cobbin figured out early on that they did share a vocabulary: descriptors like *crisp, clean, cool,* and especially *clear,* which meant, as author Dan Charnas puts it, "No additives, no bullshit." Suddenly, a lane emerged. If a soda could be said to be keeping it real, well, Sprite had as good a claim as any. Cobbin brought the concept to the agency that handled the Sprite account, who gave him back a three-line slogan: *Image is nothing. Thirst is everything. Obey your thirst.* From there, everything changed.

The "Obey Your Thirst" campaign debuted in early 1994 and immediately took off like a rocket, as Cobbin and his collaborator, Reginald Jolley, a creative at Burrell Communications in Chicago, came up with a series of commercials featuring rappers like Pete Rock, Large Professor, and Common, which faithfully represented hip-hop culture in a way that had never been seen before in mainstream advertising. Rap fans clamored to tape the commercials off TV so they could re-watch them again and again. Hip-hop magazines like *The Source* devoted glowing coverage to the spots. By the end of the year, Sprite sales had leapt nine percent, and for the next two years it would be the fastest-growing soda brand in the country.

The campaign worked in part because Cobbin saw the future before any of his peers did. He knew that hip-hop in the early 90s was no longer a niche genre—it was the new pop music. "Just as the lemon-lime soda wasn't going to stay in its lane but rather compete directly with colas, hip-hop would be matched against pop music on its own terms," wrote Charnas in his book, *The Big Payback*. "Both Sprite and hip-hop would win. Not by crossing over. But by taking over."

In the following years, Cobbin and Jolley went even further. They brought in Nas and AZ to recreate the famous stoop rap from *Wild Style,* the pioneering hip-hop film. They even convinced their corporate higher-ups to approve an ambitious, five-part, anime-style commercial where rappers from across the U.S. came together to form a new version of the super robot Voltron and defeat the evil King Zarkon—a nod to the Asian pop culture that was in turn influencing groups like the Wu-Tang Clan. A parallel campaign, "Grant Hill Drinks Sprite," built around the affable NBA player, gave the soda further inroads into black culture.

Which is pretty much how we got to now. These days, Sprite commercials still regularly feature rappers like Drake and Lil Yachty, as well as current A-list athletes like LeBron James (playing a baseball pitcher named "Big Taste," for some reason). While no longer the official soda of the NBA, Sprite was still ranked on *Forbes*'s "World's Most Valuable Brands" list in 2015, with an estimated value of more than $6 billion. Not bad for a humble lymon.

Michael Hingston is a writer in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. His new book is "Let's Go Exploring," a history and analysis of the comic strip "Calvin and Hobbes."

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY XXXXXXXX

MARIWIN ROBERTS, April 1978

LOOKING BACK

It's hard not to look at the past with rose-colored glasses. But were things really better? Why are we all longing to go back? We have to admit, though, it sure is fun to look through these vintage pictorials. The late seventies/early eighties may have been all about punk rock, oil crises, and Son of Sam; but in these pages it was all about romance. Well, that and feathered hair, ruffles, and giant bush.

ISABELLA ARDIGO,
April 1979

LAURA BENNETT DOONE, November 1976

GINGER BARTON
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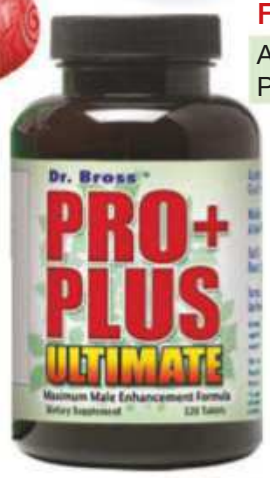

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ELEMENTS OF SCANDAL

WHY SOME #METOO SCANDALS GET TRACTION AND OTHERS FADE AWAY.

BY WILLIAM LEE

ACCUSATIONS against Harvey Weinstein—famously thanked more than God in Oscar acceptance speeches—have led to a social-sexual reorganization without modern precedent. Whereas before a simple denial or apology would have been enough to allow a man to return to public life relatively unscathed, now there are real consequences for accusations of mistreating women.

Donald Trump, who was accused by 19 women of varying degrees of sexual misconduct, is almost assuredly the cause of this moment of reckoning. "Horizontal action" is the name for a concept that can be seen in oppressive authoritarian regimes. If people realize they can't do anything about criminals in positions of major power—like a dictator—they begin to redirect their anger and sense of injustice toward those in their own lives. Since Trump was elected president, American women have been angrier than ever. Thus, #MeToo—started in 2006 by activist Tarana Burke as a movement seeking "empowerment through empathy" among women of color who have survived sexual abuse—was reinvigorated by celebrity feminists.

#MeToo scandals are a lot like snowflakes. Some dissolve quickly on wagging tongues and others join their fellows, gathering mass and momentum until they wipe out an entire village. Just like snowflakes, no two are exactly alike. But the difference is seemingly random. Why do some fade away and others gain momentum?

Enter the Elements of Scandal. This comprehensive, scientific, and completely accurate theory can predict with 100 percent surety whether public accusations will ruin a man's reputation. Note: The man's reputation will almost certainly be ruined by any accusation, but this system will allow us to figure out exactly *how* ruined that reputation will be.

Here are the categories in which you can score:

1. Multiple Accusers (MA):

One allegation is usually all it takes, but when more people get into the mix things get really real. Al Franken might have been able to survive a single allegation of groping a woman, but definitely could not survive the steady drip-drip-drip of allegations after Leeann Tweeden came forward with her initial claim.

2. Famous Accusers (FA):

The Harvey Weinstein scandal really only took off after some of his most famous alleged victims—Ashley Judd and Rose McGowan among them—told their stories. This is key because we are conditioned to believe famous people, and famous women are seen as having less to gain by coming forward with their stories. They're already famous, the thinking goes, so they don't have one of the motivations traditionally ascribed to a woman going public with scandalizing accusations—that she's only seeking fame.

3. Perceived Hypocrisy (PH):

These scandals are particularly bad when it seems like the man has taken strong feminist positions in the past. Obviously nobody was going onstage in mid-2017 saying, "I think rape is actually good, and I'm proud to say I would totally do it." But especially bad are the people that were previously known as feminist champions, like Aziz Ansari.

4. Strong Imagery (SI):

Matt Lauer seems like a run-of-the-mill creepy boss. Sure, he liked to bang interns and put people in uncomfortable situations with insistent advances. That's bad, and it's even worse when it's at the expense of young women trying to make it in television. But the thing that made his scandal really pop was the now-infamous button that closed and locked his office door. Of course, it's now common knowledge that every executive office at NBC had that button and that it didn't lock the door from the inside, but people hear "rape button" and something breaks in their brains.

5. Leaving A Trail (LT):

There's nothing people love more than playing detective. Whenever a celebrity is accused, the first move is always to comb through their past work to find hints or clues that the accused celebrity had a guilty conscience and was trying to tell us all along—through their art. This happened to Louis C.K. His show *Louie* dealt explicitly with nonconsensual masturbation in the "Pamela" arc, and with consent in several other episodes. His film *I Love You, Daddy* was recast as a sick attempt by the comedian to explore his deviant fetishes, while we all paid money for the privilege.

6. Open Secret (OS):

If people are telling jokes about your sketchy behavior before the accusations appear in *The New Yorker,* then you have an open secret. Consider Seth Meyers's joke about Harvey Weinstein at the Oscars, or the *Family Guy* joke about Stewie running naked through a mall yelling that he had just escaped from Kevin Spacey's basement.

7. Cover-Up (CO):

Any effort made by the celebrity to stop people finding out about their alleged crimes means that the cover-up multiplier comes into play. Think about Harvey Weinstein hiring ex-Israeli intelligence through Black Cube to spy on potential accusers. Creepy, right? What they say is true: The cover-up is (almost) always worse than the crime.

Confused? Don't be! We will walk you through some scandals and show you how all of these categories apply.

ILLUSTRATION OF HARVEY WEINSTEIN'S FACE: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY EYERAZOR

HARVEY WEINSTEIN: 7 Harveys

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY LEV RADIN

There's a reason Harvey was the one to kick-start the #MeToo movement. He was exacting with the filmmakers that worked for him and held himself to equally high standards when it came to becoming the most notorious alleged sexual predator in modern American history. Weinstein checked off all seven categories about as thoroughly as possible: **MA,** Weinstein ended up with more than 80 accusers when all was said and done; **FA,** the *New York Times*'s initial report started with an accusation by Ashley Judd, and he was later accused of misconduct by Uma Thurman, Penélope Cruz, Gwyneth Paltrow, Rose McGowan, and others; **PH,** Weinstein won humanitarian awards and was an outspoken advocate for Hillary Clinton; **SI,** we are left with the indelible image of Weinstein chasing actresses around the Peninsula Beverly Hills hotel wearing only a towel; **LT,** on-the-record stories of Weinstein's anger were legion, though often presented as indicative of his high standards; **OS,** "Congratulations," Seth Meyers joked while presenting the list of Best Actress nominees at the 2013 Oscars, "you five ladies no longer have to pretend to be attracted to Harvey Weinstein"; **CO,** when you hire something called Black Cube to investigate your accusers, and that comes out, you are fucked. Weinstein was such a perfect spark to light the tinderbox of public allegations because he hit every category possible. Congratulations on your win, Mr. Weinstein.

JAMES TOBACK: 2 Harveys

Why did director and writer James Toback not reach the same heights of scandal as did Weinstein? The answer is simple: He didn't score nearly as many points. Though Toback was accused by 310 women of misconduct (**MA**), a list featuring Selma Blair, Rachel McAdams, and Julianne Moore (**FA**), he didn't leave as much of a lasting impression. His alleged MO was seemingly standard creepy casting-couch fare, so there wasn't any SI. He didn't go to nearly the same lengths as Weinstein did to cover up his alleged crimes, so there's no CO, either. Thus, although he was debatably four times as prolific a creeper as Weinstein, we mostly forget about him in the story of the #MeToo year.

LOUIS C.K.: 6 Harveys

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / JAMES TOBACK BY ANDREA RAFFIN / LOUIS C.K. BY PHOTO WORKS

My wish for you is that you one day love anything as much as Louis C.K. allegedly loved beating off in front of uncomfortable women. Though Louis's alleged crimes are orders of magnitude less severe than Harvey Weinstein's, he's often mentioned in the same sentence. Why? Well, because Louis scored a shocking six Harveys. The first reports about him included five women, notching him an **MA**. Though none of them were famous, they described Louis masturbating, which he often pantomimed in his comedy, scoring him an **SI**. He presented himself as a champion of women, a guy with an executive producer credit on feminist comedy series *Better Things* and Tig Notaro's Amazon series, *One Mississippi* (**PH)**. He also scored in **LT** and **OS,** with constant references to semi-consensual situations in his comedy and writing career. His manager, Dave Becky, reportedly threatened legal action against some of his accusers, which counts in the **CO** category.

AZIZ ANSARI: 1 Harvey

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY LEV RADIN

There's a reason that this is often described as a tipping point in the #MeToo movement–Ansari scores just a single Harvey. Feminists were upset at his perceived hypocrisy **(PH),** but he only ever had one accuser and seemed to immediately take responsibility, both in texts to her and publicly after the allegation surfaced. It was easy to dismiss Ansari's behavior as a one-time mistake, and he didn't really lose any gigs. His name pops up in these discussions because of his fame and the revelation's timing, but he will definitely be able to bounce back.

MATT LAUER: 5 Harveys

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY JSTONE

Lauer earned his place on this list because of alleged long-running predatory behavior at NBC. Though there seemed to be little in the way of a cover-up, Lauer's case checked boxes for **SI, PH, MA, LT,** and **OS**. The so-called "rape button" left such a strong impression that his office was straight up demolished rather than given to a new occupant. Video also surfaced of Katie Couric telling Andy Cohen on *Watch What Happens Live* that Lauer would regularly pinch her ass. Lauer scored hypocrite points for grilling Bill O'Reilly on-air about sexual harassment, all while allegedly doing much the same himself.

ASIA ARGENTO: 4 Harveys

The list's only dual entry comes as Argento became both accuser and accused during the #MeToo moment. She accused Weinstein of raping her, though she acknowledged they subsequently had a long consensual sexual relationship. Argento stood at the vanguard of the #MeToo movement until August, when the *New York Times* published news of a settlement she had reached with her own accuser, Jimmy Bennett, who said she had sex with him when he was just 17 and she was 37. Argento met Bennett when he was seven and they filmed *The Heart is Deceitful Above All Things,* which she also directed and helped write–that's **LT,** especially since she plays his mother in the movie. Her major **PH** was buttressed by the **SI** of a photograph of the pair in bed on the night of the alleged assault. The $380K payment to Bennett in exchange for copyright of the image qualifies her for **CO**. That's a four-Harvey total, which puts her in the middle of the pack of #MeToo celebs.

KEVIN SPACEY: 4 Harveys

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / ASIA ARGENTO BY DENIS / KEVIN SPACEY BY DEBBY WONG

Though the fall from grace was swift and severe, Spacey's scandal wasn't as spectacular as some of the others on this list. His **FA,** Anthony Rapp, accused him of attempted sexual assault when Rapp was just 14. Subsequently, the Old Vic theater in London received 20 additional complaints of sexual misconduct (**MA**). Spacey's statement, which focused mainly on the actor's closeted gay sexuality, was close enough to **PH** that it only fanned the flames. And rumors of Spacey not observing boundaries with young men during work had been circulating through Hollywood for years. Not to mention the *Family Guy* joke. There's your **OS**.

Our readers' exotic sexcapades brought to life...

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SALEM 2.0

THE RETURN OF THE RELIGIOUS POLICE TO THE PUBLIC SQUARE.

BY TOBY YOUNG

I RECENTLY picked up a paperback by a *New York Times* journalist in a bookshop and read the following on the back cover: "A major metropolitan newspaper announces that half of its new employees will have to be women and the other half members of minority groups. At a Milwaukee school district, 'inappropriate staring' has been labeled a form of sexual harassment, punishable by dismissal. And a proposed new American history syllabus features such topics as 'Why I Am Not Thankful for Thanksgiving,' 'Once Upon A Genocide,' and 'George Washington: Speculator in Native Lands.'" It went on to describe these incidents as representative of a new, puritanical, left-wing movement that's sweeping contemporary America. The author—Richard Bernstein—labeled this crusade "the Inquisition."

Oh no, I thought. *That's exactly the book I want to write*. For the last nine months, I've been collecting stories like these, from the two white women who were forced to shut down their business selling burritos out of a food truck in Portland after they were accused of "cultural appropriation," to the editor of a prestigious New York magazine who was fired for publishing an article by a Canadian radio host, a man charged with sexual assault *and then acquitted on all counts*.

I even have a title: *Salem 2.0*.

But here was a journalist who got there before me. Damn him.

Then I took a closer look. The book, called *Dictatorship of Virtue,* had been published in 1995. *It was 23 years old*. I was relieved, obviously, but also a bit puzzled: Had the liberal left really been this batshit-crazy for decades? Were the "social justice warriors" who had appeared since the election of Donald Trump—"the Resistance"—just the latest troops in a culture war dating back to the Reagan era? Was the *Great Awokening* (another title I've been thinking about) just a cyclical recurrence of political correctness? Would I have to call my book *Salem 3.0* instead? That didn't have quite the same ring to it.

I returned to my writer's desk feeling a bit disheartened, but after some reflection I began to perk up. There's no question that the current moment in American culture—and across the Anglosphere more generally—is firmly embedded in an anti-Western, anti-bourgeois ideology that stretches back decades. But it's also true that something's happened in the past few years to turbocharge this movement and it's gathered such momentum we seem to be on the verge of acquiring critical mass.

Put it another way: It's as if the discontent that has been rumbling away among left-wing intellectuals for years has suddenly exploded into a cacophonous rage. A regressive political philosophy fueled by guilt, self-loathing, and resentment that used to be confined to Ivy League universities, Hollywood liberals, and the fringes of the Democratic Party has gone viral and infected millions of people in the U.S., Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

If you're a white heterosexual male, look out.

The mob already came for me, incidentally. At the beginning of the year, I was appointed to the board of a regulatory body in the U.K., and as soon as it was announced an army of hashtag activists started trawling through my social media history to find evidence that I wasn't a fit person to serve as a member of this august public institution. No one had ever heard of it before I was appointed, my role was incredibly minor, and there was no salary attached, but the fact that I'd been appointed by a conservative prime minister meant there was an opportunity to score some political points. It didn't take the online metal-detectorists long to strike gold.

Ten years ago, I was a judge on a food reality show with the Indian supermodel Padma Lakshmi, and I'd composed a handful of tweets late at night, salivating over her boobs. There were some other, equally sophomoric comments about the breasts of other celebrities. Not exactly Harvey Weinstein territory, but it didn't stop me from being targeted by #MeToo activists.

An outrage mob sprung up on Twitter, baying for my blood. According to them, I embodied everything that was wrong with the British establishment: male, pale, and stale. A message was relayed from the prime minister's office that it might be in everyone's best interests if I stood down. I duly obliged and, shortly afterward, I was stripped of my honorary fellowship from the University of Buckingham, kicked off the boards of two charities, and had to resign from my full-time job.

This experience is what gave me the idea for the book, obviously, but the fact that I was skewered by a twitchfork mob doesn't mean I'm wrong. This latest manifestation of political activism is different from earlier versions by an order of magnitude.

For one thing, there's the sheer, muddleheaded, Bizarro World nuttiness of it. We're told that "hate speech" is a great evil, unless you're advocating the hatred of men (a recent column in the *Washington Post* was headlined "Why can't we hate men?"), which is absolutely fine. According to a recent poll of "woke"

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM BY / EVERETT HISTORICAL / ILLUSTRATION BY HOWARD PYLE

Salem Witch Trials. Two women stand on trial in 1682 with guards, as the accusing girls demonstrate their demonic afflictions.

academics and policy experts, the United States is the tenth most dangerous country in the world for women—far more dangerous than Iran, even though Iranian women caught not wearing the full hijab by the religious police are routinely sentenced to 74 lashes. All men are "privileged"—we're just supposed to accept that without question—in spite of the fact that 75 percent of the suicides reported in the U.K. in 2016 were men, 79 percent of homicide victims across the world are men, 93 percent of prison inmates in the U.S. are men, 94 percent of Americans killed in industrial accidents are men, and 99.9 percent of soldiers killed in combat are men.

And, of course, all white people are "privileged" as well, including the victims of the opioid epidemic, who constituted the majority of the 72,000 people estimated to have died from drug overdoses in 2017, and in spite of the fact that poor white boys do worse in school than any other ethnic group. There are now fewer white births than deaths in a majority of U.S. states, American black women have higher college attendance rates than white men, and college-educated black women have higher incomes than college-educated white women. For the social justice warriors on the left, it's as if reality itself is a social construct, not just race and gender.

Then there's the insidious way in which Maoist intolerance of those who dissent from progressive orthodoxy has embedded itself in company policies, bureaucratic procedures, and legal systems. I'm not just talking about the punishment meted out to James Damore, the Google employee who dared to question the company's diversity and inclusion policy. He was fired for creating a "hostile work environment"—a decision that was rubber-stamped by the National Labor Relations Board (so much for the First Amendment).

I'm also thinking of the change to the Canadian Human Rights Act and Criminal Code which makes it a misdemeanor, punishable by law, if you refuse to use a trans person's preferred gender pronoun. Jordan Peterson warned us about that last year and, of course, was immediately accused of "helping to foster a climate for hate to thrive" by trans activists, left-wing academics, and labor unions.

Twenty-five years ago, we had the "Antioch Rules," which made it an offense at Antioch College for a man to engage in a sexual encounter without receiving "affirmative consent" at every stage of the seduction process. But that was regarded by most people at the time as an example of political correctness gone mad and parodied on *Saturday Night Live*. Today, following President Obama's supercharging of Title IX, the "Antioch Rules" apply in virtually every American university, and hundreds of young men have been branded "rapists" by kangaroo courts and kicked out of college for failing to observe this absurd protocol. One poor guy was found guilty of "rape" because he couldn't remember whether he'd asked for permission to remove his girlfriend's belt, even though they'd dated for over a year after that initial encounter.

In Britain, there's been a massive uptick in "hate crimes"—a new category of criminal offense created in 2007, not by an Act of Parliament, but by a group of unelected officials. If you say or write something that another person is offended by, and that person thinks you're motivated by hostility or prejudice toward them based on a personal characteristic, you're guilty of a "hate crime." Doesn't matter whether that is in fact your motive, all that counts is that the offended person *perceives* it to be.

At present, there are five "protected characteristics"—disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and transgender identity—but the British government is thinking of adding "gender" to the list and outlawing "misogyny." Given that some feminists think climate change is caused by "misogyny," God knows who will end up in the dock. The executive board of British Petroleum? Earlier this year, a comedy writer named Graham Linehan was given a "verbal harassment warning" by the West Yorkshire Police for "deadnaming" a trans activists on Twitter—i.e., using her original male name, rather than her new chosen name.

I could go on. Scarcely a day passes without a "cishet" white male being "called out" on Twitter for some thought-crime or other. A twitchfork mob immediately forms up and within days, sometimes hours, the guy is tossed to the wolves. Recent examples include Kevin Williamson, who was hired then fired by *The Atlantic* after some intemperate remarks about abortion were dug up; Alessandro Strumia, a theoretical physicist at CERN who was immediately suspended and placed under "investigation" after he challenged the feminist dogma about why more women don't do physics; and Stephen Galloway, a creative writing professor who lost his job at the University of British Columbia after he was falsely accused of rape by a disgruntled ex-girlfriend.

SCARCELY A DAY PASSES WITHOUT A "CISHET" WHITE MALE BEING "CALLED OUT" FOR SOME THOUGHT-CRIME OR OTHER. A TWITCHFORK MOB IMMEDIATELY FORMS UP AND WITHIN DAYS THE GUY IS TOSSED TO THE WOLVES.

Still don't believe me? A Harvard University survey conducted two years ago found that 51 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 do not support capitalism, compared to 42 percent who said they support it. That's up four percentage points from a 2011 Pew survey where already 47 percent of the same age-group held a negative view of capitalism.

So what accounts for this explosion in ultra-liberal attitudes? How did political correctness metastasize?

One possibility, not to be lightly dismissed, is that the world has become a much more unfair place in the past few years. Of course people are protesting more—there's more to protest about. But is that true?

The answer is no. Take racism, for instance. By almost every measure, racism is declining in the United States. In 1967, when miscegenation laws were repealed, three percent of all newlyweds were married to someone of a different race. In 2015, that number had risen to 17 percent. Next time some placard-carrying millennial tells you that all white Americans are racist, point out that more than one in ten white newlyweds have married a person of a different race.

Economically, African-American men have never been doing better. According to a recent report by the American Enterprise Institute, 57 percent of black Americans now belong to the upper or middle class, compared to just 38 percent in 1960. The share of black men in poverty, by contrast, has fallen from 41 percent in 1960 to 18 percent today. It's the same story for Hispanic-Americans—55 percent belong to the upper or middle class—and Asian-Americans (73 percent). Police shootings? According to the Harvard economist Roland Fryer, blacks are no more likely to be shot by police officers than whites.

When comparing different countries, one way of measuring the level of racism is to ask whether people in that country would object if a person of another race moved in next-door. By that metric, the U.S., Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are among the least racist countries in the world. Less than five percent of Britons said they would object, compared to more than 40 percent of Indians and Jordanians.

What about homophobia? Again, all the survey data suggests attitudes toward homosexuals across the Anglosphere have never

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY LEREMY

THESE DIGITAL NATIVES ARE IMPERVIOUS TO REASON ONCE THEY'VE MADE UP THEIR MIND ABOUT SOMEONE, AND THINK THE BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH THAT PERSON IS TO PUSH THEM OUT OF THE BODY POLITIC AS IF THEY ARE A POLLUTANT OR A PATHOGEN.

been more liberal. For instance, just 35 percent of Americans were in favor of gay marriage in 2001. By 2017, that number had grown to 62 percent. Ditto for the U.K., where the number approving same-sex marriage climbed from 17 percent in 1983 to 64 percent by 2016.

Gender? Contrary to the views of gender studies professors, the fairer sex have never had it so good. In the U.S., women comprise over 56 percent of students at college, while in the U.K., 40,000 more women than men enrolled at universities this fall.

As for the so-called "rape epidemic" on American college campuses, it's a myth. Sexual assaults of female college students in the U.S. dropped by more than half between 1997 and 2013, and in the same period young women in college were less likely to be assaulted than those who weren't in college.

The gender pay gap? Once you control for the fact that women are more interested in lower-paying jobs than men (only nine percent of nurses are male), are more likely to take time out to start a family, and have a higher preference for part-time work, the gap disappears. Academics in the field of gender studies will tell you different, of course, but a recent survey found that full professors in this field are paid, on average, $15,000 a year more than full professors in STEM subjects.

Okay, you might say. Maybe those lucky enough to live in the West are doing all right. But what about the less fortunate? No one would question that capitalism is wreaking a terrible toll on the developing world, would they? Well, yes, they would. Since 1990, more than a billion people across the planet have been lifted out of extreme poverty—114 million of them in a single year (2013)—thanks to the free enterprise system. The people millennials should be feeling sorry for are the citizens of the people's republic of Venezuela. When Hugo Chavez came to power in 1998, 40 percent of Venezuelan households were living in poverty. Last year, that figure had climbed to 82 percent.

When you look at the data, there is *less* for liberals to protest than there has been at any point in the past 50 years. So why have they gone crazy? What gives?

According to Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt (a First Amendment lawyer and social psychologist, respectively), who've made a study of the anti-free speech culture on American campuses, the reason for this sea change is because today's students and recent college graduates have been raised by overprotective, liberal parents and spend too much time on the internet. These digital natives believe the world is divided between good people and evil people, are impervious to reason once they've made up their mind about someone, and think the best way to deal with that person is to push them out of the body politic as if they are a pollutant or a pathogen. Not literally, but metaphorically, by "no-platforming" them, heckling them, ordering them to "check their privilege," and, if necessary, "calling them out" on social media, i.e., publicly shaming them.

In their new book *The Coddling of the American Mind,* Lukianoff and Haidt note that millennials couch their objections to these "bad people" in psychological rather than ideological terms. Thus, the reason they don't want conservatives like Ben

Shapiro and Ann Coulter appearing on campus is not because they disagree with their political views, but because they "trigger" them or make them feel "unsafe." Most people would take these claims with a pinch of salt, suspecting that students are weaponizing their mental health in order to push their liberal agenda. But Lukianoff and Haidt take them seriously. They believe there is something actually wrong with young Americans: They are far more psychologically fragile than they should be, thanks to the bubbles and echo chambers they've spent their lives in, and cannot cope with conflict or challenge. The solution, then, is to get them to toughen up—or, at least, persuade them that engaging with people holding different views won't cause them lasting psychological harm.

One problem with this analysis is that it fails to account for why these authoritarian Young Turks skew left rather than right. After all, if their main concern is to avoid the anxiety they believe arises out of viewpoint diversity, wouldn't any political creed serve as well as any other provided everyone signs up to it? Why have they embraced the teachings of Karl Marx and Michel Foucault rather than Edmund Burke and Friedrich Hayek? Lukianoff and Haidt have an answer to this. It's because their professors are overwhelmingly left-wing.

The expert on political bias in the American academy is the political scientist Stanley Rothman. According to him, the proportion of U.S. professors describing themselves as right-wing declined from 34 percent in 1984 to 15 percent in 1999, and those describing themselves as left-wing increased from 39 percent to 72 percent in the same period. And the shift has continued—accelerated, even—in the last two decades. According to a study carried out by *Econ Journal Watch* in 2016, which looked at the voter registration of faculty members at 40 leading American universities in the fields of economics, history, law, psychology, and journalism/communications, Democrats outnumber Republicans by 11.5 to one on average. In psychology, the ratio is 17.4 to one; in history, it's 33.5 to one. A more recent study of 51 of the top-ranked 66 liberal arts colleges by Mitchell Langbert, carried out in 2018, found that 39 percent of them had no Republican staff on their faculties at all.

"The political registration in most of the remaining 61 percent, with a few important exceptions, is slightly more than zero percent but nevertheless absurdly skewed against Republican affiliation and in favor of Democratic affiliation," writes Langbert. "Thus, 78.2 percent of the academic departments in my sample have either zero Republicans, or so few as to make no difference."

Whether Lukianoff and Haidt are correct in their core analysis, this extraordinary political imbalance in American universities must have played a part in radicalizing the generation that has come of age in the new millennium. And the same pattern emerges in other parts of the Anglosphere. In the U.K., for instance, those academics saying they would vote for right-of-center parties declined from 35 percent in 1964 to 11 percent in 2011, and those saying they'd vote for left-of-center parties increased from 64 percent in 1964 to 77 percent in 2015.

Other factors are surely at play, too. One thing that used to act as a firebreak on the spread of radical, socialist ideas was the distinction between the regressive left and the progressive left. Moderate liberals have generally treated hard-left political activists with caution, knowing that in the twentieth century, communist regimes were responsible for something like 100 million unnecessary deaths. But the line between the progressive and regressive left has always been quite fuzzy, and it's become blurrier still since the election of Donald Trump in 2016. That event—and to a lesser extent the electoral success of right-wing populist movements across Europe, including Brexit—has polarized party politics and enabled the regressive left to capture large swathes of the moderate left.

In addition, the melding of hard-left dogma with post-modernism—what Jordan Peterson calls "postmodern Neo-Marxism"—has helped with its rapid spread in the last few years, even though that phenomenon dates back to the 1960s. It's almost as if a group of cultural terrorists had been perfecting a virus in a lab for 50 years and then waited for just the right moment to release it.

Many progressive liberals have ended up feeling like apostates just because they have remained true to their original values, while all around them friends and allies have shifted leftwards. Some of them—such as the former Evergreen State College professor Bret Weinstein, who was hounded off campus by baseball bat-wielding thugs—have ended up as leading lights of what's been called the Intellectual Dark Web.

Another theory, this one propounded by the African-American intellectual John McWhorter, is that the phenomenon of "wokeness" is a new, secular religion, and one reason it has grown so fast is because traditional, organized religions have experienced a steep decline in recent years. That would explain why social justice warriors expect you to take so much of what they say on faith and why they treat those who challenge them as apostates—evildoers, motivated by venal self-interest—rather than worthy intellectual opponents.

THE SOLUTION IS TO GET YOUNG AMERICANS TO TOUGHEN UP—OR, AT LEAST, PERSUADE THEM THAT ENGAGING WITH SOMEONE HOLDING DIFFERENT VIEWS WON'T CAUSE THEM LASTING PSYCHOLOGICAL HARM.

It also fits with their fondness for reciting bits of dogma as if they were liturgical incantations, like the protestors at Middlebury College who responded to a speech by the conservative political scientist Charles Murray by chanting the following catechism in unison: "Science has always been used to legitimize racism, sexism, classism, transphobia, ableism, and homophobia, all veiled as rational and fact, and supported by the government and state. In this world today, there is little that is true 'fact'." Finally, it explains why straight white males who want to be accepted into the church of political correctness have to confess to being racist—the woke version of original sin.

So what can you do, particularly if a mob is gathering outside your home chanting "Time's up"? (I had a pack of jackals on my doorstep, although, to be fair, they were all journalists.) A ray of hope was provided by a recent report for an organization called More in Common which divided Americans into seven camps: Devoted Conservatives, Traditional Conservatives, Moderates, Politically Disengaged, Passive Liberals, Traditional Liberals, and Progressive Activists. According to the report, only people in the last category are members of Team Woke. They may shout the loudest, and, in doing so, persuade the rest of us that they're far more numerous than they are, but in fact they only constitute eight percent of American adults. By contrast, 80 percent of people polled by the report's authors agreed with the statement "political correctness is a problem in our country." Social justice warriors, it turns out, are in a tiny minority.

The answer, then, is for the "frustrated majority"—that's how we're

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY JOHN AREHART

referred to in this report—to stop kowtowing to these self-appointed commissars of the public square and start standing up to them. The reason they have such unprecedented power at this moment in our culture and can cast into the outer darkness anyone who dissents from their sacred beliefs is because we've allowed them to have it. To quote the phrase that empowered the British people to vote to leave the European Union, it's time to "take back control."

Okay, where's my typewriter? Time to get going on *Salem 2.0.*

Toby Young is an associate editor of the Spectator and an associate editor of Quillette. He is the author of "How to Lose Friends and Alienate People," an account of his stint as an editor at Vanity Fair that was made into a film starring Simon Pegg.

THE NEW PURITANS LIST

By Penthouse Staff • Illustrations by Thomas Warming

TODAY in America, puritanical rituals are back with a vengeance. Since Donald Trump floated down his golden escalator screaming about Mexican rapists, the left and right have led public pillaging of people's reputations, often with scant concern for little things like evidence, due process, truth, and reality. The left and right may not agree on any policy, but they both have concluded that public shaming is the way to get things done.

The phrase "New Puritans" has made a few select appearances in the past 40-plus years, with its meaning and application varying. Texas senator Barbara Jordan used it while keynoting the 1976 Democratic National Convention. British trends forecaster Jim Murphy used it a decade ago to describe a shift in British young people away from hyper-consumerism and indulgence. Over at the right-wing conspiracy site Infowars, the phrase has been used to tar progressives as free-speech-hating, censorious inquisitors.

What does New Puritan mean to us? It means a person burning to brand others with a twenty-first-century scarlet letter meant to invite ignominy, ridicule, hatred, and shunning. They span the ideological spectrum, these New Puritans. They might not share a common politics, but they meet on the village green when it comes to the mechanics and motives of shaming. They like to denounce. They like to punish. They slip quickly into overreaction, throttling up into hysteria. They're intolerant. They work to incite mobs. Their angry finger-pointing can be self-interested, advancing their own agenda, building their brand. And though they've chosen shaming as a method, they're often shameless themselves.

Here's our *Penthouse* list of the top, most obnoxious New Puritans in America, ranked in order of power.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

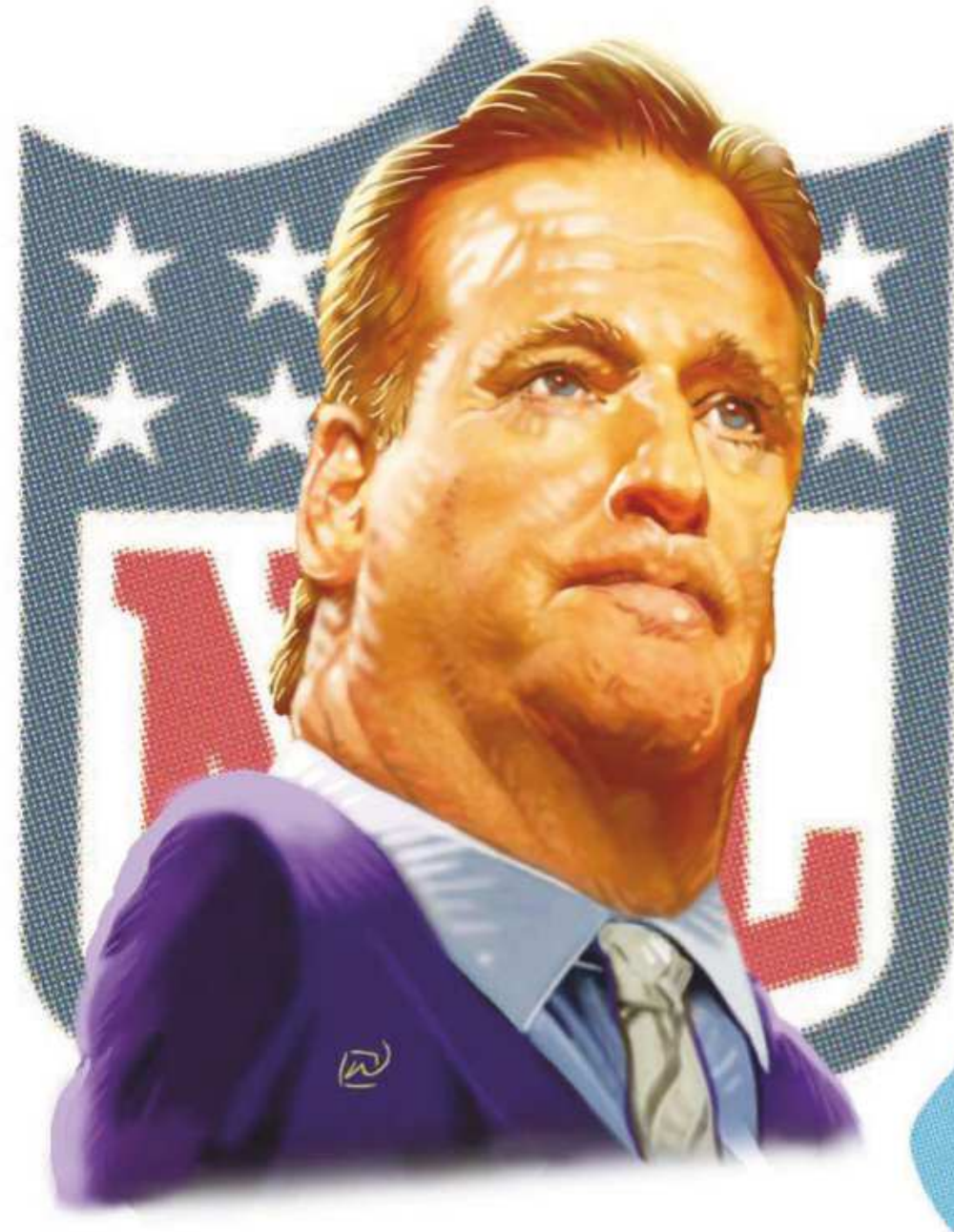
Donny J. sits in the most powerful office on the planet, yet he spends half his time crying victim because *My Life on the D-List* star Kathy Griffin mocked him, the "failing" *New York Times* exposed his tax shenanigans and multimillion-dollar handouts from his dad, and, like, five trans people wanted to serve in the military. All this from the man who coined the nicknames "Sloppy" Steve Bannon, "Crazy" Jim Acosta, "Little Rocket Man" Kim Jong Un, "Pocahontas" Elizabeth Warren, "Crooked" Hillary, "Sleepy" Joe Biden, "Fake Tears" Chuck Schumer, "Low IQ" Maxine Waters, "Low Energy" Jeb, "Horseface" Stormy Daniels, and "Dumbest Man on Television" Don "Sour" Lemon. If he didn't remind you on a daily basis, you'd have no clue this thin-skinned bully was president.

ROGER GOODELL

The NFL commissioner earns over $31 million a year, fourteen times more than his players who endure lifelong injuries. You'd think Goodell would respect his meal tickets, but when Colin Kaepernick kneeled, Goodell falsely accused him of attacking the flag when the quarterback was actually protesting the oppression of black Americans. Goodell went on to paint Kaepernick as unpatriotic. But there's a reason the First Amendment is No. 1 in the Bill of Rights before other important laws, like the right to bear arms and the right to privacy: There's nothing more patriotic than exercising your free speech.

BRETT KAVANAUGH

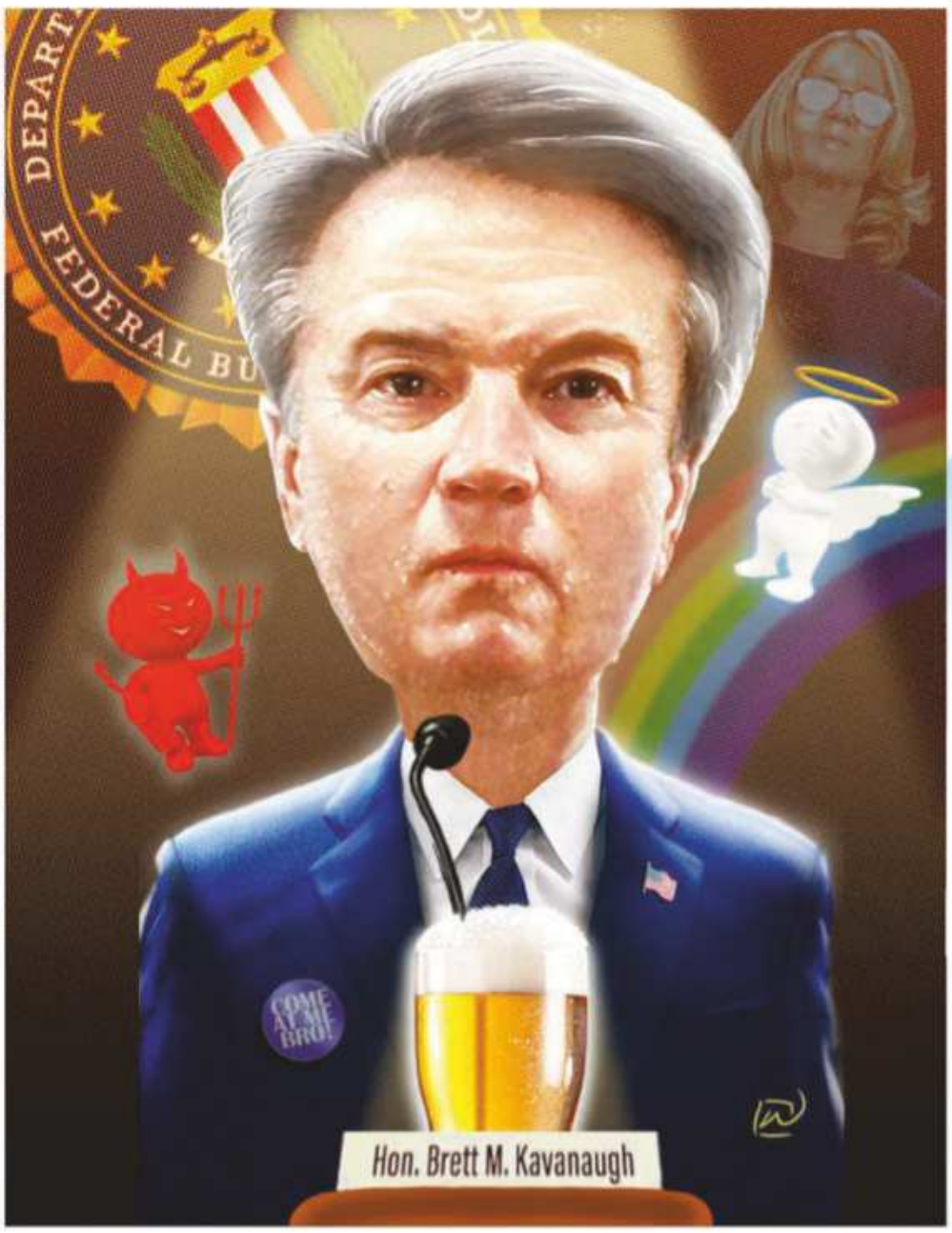
A classic pampered crybaby, the judge claimed Democratic senators investigated a sexual assault allegation against him as revenge for "the Clintons," who are currently out of



office somewhere in the woods taking old-people medicine. His language escalating, he warned that the actions of these senators would sow "the wind for decades to come," and America would reap the whirlwind. Kavanaugh went on, like Justice Clarence Thomas, to darkly insinuate that his experience during the hearing wouldn't be forgotten when it came time for him to rule on cases pushed by liberals in the future. Despite media revelations into his behavior, his accuser's compelling testimony, and protests from women on the left, Kavanaugh was sworn in to the Supreme Court. To quell any rumors that he would vote to overturn *Roe vs. Wade,* Kavanaugh did a little virtue-signaling and hired four female clerks to work for him. Nice move, Kav.

MICHAEL AVENATTI

In the past year, Penthouse Pet of the Century Stormy Daniels's bald, just-below-average-height attorney has complained that Trump's former lawyer Michael Cohen worked to silence Daniels, complained about Fox News host Tucker Carlson nicknaming him "Creepy Porn Lawyer," and called Trump a "bully." He's



also blocked journalists on Twitter, threatened to sue The Daily Caller, called Carlson a "pig," attacked female CNN journalist and author S. E. Cupp as well as Senator Susan Collins, and tweeted #basta at anyone he wishes would shut up and get out of his way. He says he's running to secure the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination as the "liberal" Donald Trump, and he's right: same tactics, different targets, and just as fucking annoying.

KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND

New York senator Kirsten Gillibrand has called for criminal justice reform, but she rallied other senators to demand Sen. Al Franken resign over sexual harassment allegations without an investigation of the claims, which involved kissing and touching, along with the much-seen photo of the comedian pretending to fondle the breasts of Leeann Tweeden during a 2006 USO tour they shared. In the face of the mob and public pressure, he resigned, but the questions remain unanswered. Some liberals blame Gillibrand for her undemocratic, knee-jerk reaction. Franken is now also in the woods with the Clintons.

ALEX JONES

Despite having the net worth of a top-tier Victoria's Secret model, InfoWars mogul Alex Jones is not happy with America. After years of spewing crazy conspiracy theories and so-called insider government information about chemtrails, Jones was recently booted from *all* social media platforms. Twitter initially let Jones stay in the game, but then big ol' dumb-dumb flew from Texas to Washington, D.C., to scream in Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's face.

A brilliant move that predictably backfired. Instead of admitting his own faults–and that he may, just *may,* have taken it a bit too far when he claimed the government was turning frogs gay from estrogen–Jones has whelped like a puppy dog. And all this has happened as he's refused to apologize for calling the Sandy Hook school shooting a hoax and encouraging his fans to attack the parents of the victims. Like his daddy Donald Trump, Jones cries victim while monetizing one of the biggest bully pulpits on the web. But hey, not even Jack Dorsey can stop him from selling a Patriot Pantry Pizza Kit for $97.46!

NICOLE CLIFFE

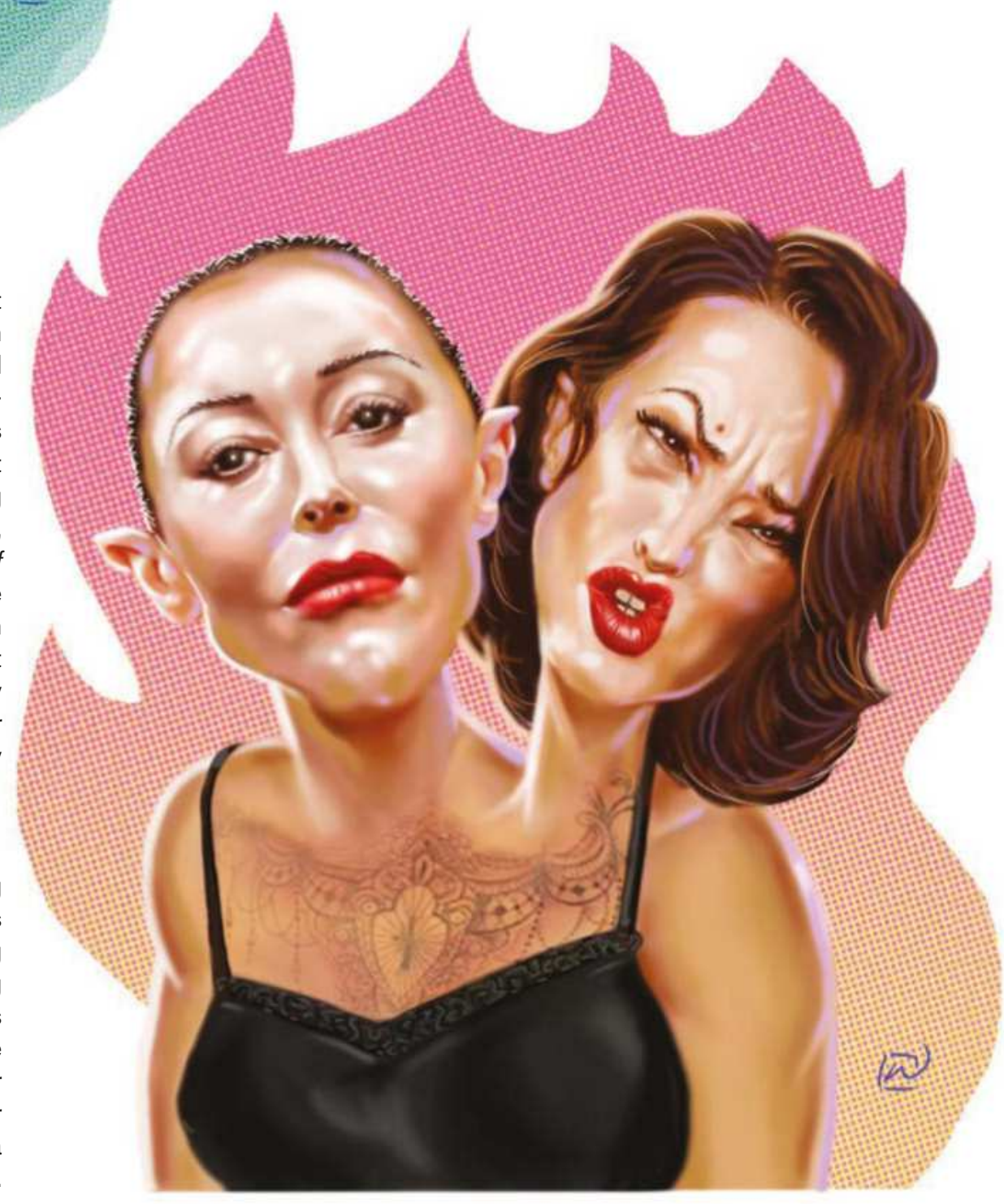
A wealthy man's born-again Christian, feminist spouse, Cliffe leads a very unchristian life. In between spending her husband's money and taking selfies in her muumuus, this Utah writer-editor has mobilized her 80,000 Twitter followers to attack writer Katie Roiphe over an essay that Cliffe had not read, accused a stranger of being transphobic and "obsessed" with trans women, and helped convince the *New York Review of Books* to fire editor Ian Buruma because he published an essay by Jian Ghomeshi, a Canadian radio host who was accused of sexual assault and acquitted in court. Why does this relatively unknown former blogger have so much power in American letters? How did this mean mommy mobilize such a powerful shame mob?

LAURA LOOMER

You probably have not heard about this nothing burger, but "Looms," as her friends call her, has interrupted a congressional hearing while holding a pink selfie stick, run around Manhattan yelling at women in hijabs, and whined after she was banned from Lyft and Uber for tweeting, "Someone needs to create a non-Islamic form of @uber or @lyft because I never want to support another Islamic immigrant driver." Whenever she posts a video of herself screaming at a member of the U.S. government while they're walking to get a bagel, she hashtags the event #LOOMERED. Unfortunately, this douche is a U.S. citizen, because otherwise we would love to get her deported. Guess what Looms? You just got #LOOMERED.

ROSE MCGOWAN and ASIA ARGENTO

After they both alleged they'd been sexually assaulted by Harvey Weinstein, these two 1990s actresses anointed themselves the face of #MeToo. Like Siamese twins, Rosacea—as *The Stranger* columnist Katie Herzog calls McGowan and Argento—posed for any photo op where they could pump their fists, denied accused men due process, and rallied their #RoseArmy to shame feminists who rejected #BelieveWomen. But this August, the *New York Times* dropped a bombshell revealing that Argento had allegedly sexually assaulted 17-year-old actor Jimmy Bennett and paid him $380,000 to keep his mouth shut about it. (Like Weinstein, she denied the allegations.) Feeling betrayed by the revelation, McGowan issued a statement accusing Argento of having received unsolicited nude pics of Bennett since he was 12. Lawsuit threats followed, McGowan apologized and called #MeToo "bullshit," and Rosacea was no more. Needless to say, the frenemies' witch hunts live on. Girl power!



WICKED LADY

Our December Pet of the Month Alina Lopez doesn't give a shit about the culture wars. In fact, when we started to talk about politics, she plugged her fingers in her ears and started singing, "La la la!" Just kidding. Alina isn't an idiot. She's incredibly smart, but like Melania Trump, she prefers to keep her political opinions to herself. Instead of talking about the country's so-called impending doom, we let this beauty loose in the most chill house we could find.

Photography: Suss Oldmen

SHARE THE LOVE

Did you just have the wildest night of your life? Did your greatest fantasy come true? Or did you spy the sensual goings-on of other uninhibited adventurers.

Share the love and spill all your secrets. Tell your story to Penthouse, and you may see your letter in these very pages.

E-mail your torrid tales to **Letters@Penthouse.com**

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PENTHOUSE
ALINA LOPEZ
DECEMBER 2018 PET OF THE MONTH

ALINA LOPEZ

Vital Stats:
32C-28-37
23 years old
5'6"

Hometown: Seattle, Washington

Elephant in the room: You have the longest, greatest tongue in the business.

My tongue has definitely taken me to new places in my career! I've shot scenes specifically written to show off my tongue and they have all been so fun!

Do you have any hidden talents?

I'm a show-off. None of my talents are a secret!

Where is your favorite place to escape to when you feel like you're going to snap?

My happy place is near water. Whether it's the ocean or a lake or even a backyard pool. Water is calming to me.

Are you a good cook?

I love to cook! I grew up with homemade meals, mostly Mexican dishes that my mom made. My favorite dish to cook is layered nachos. Not that impressive, I just love to eat them!

We give you $20,000 today, but you have to spend it by tomorrow. What do you do?

I would use it as a down payment on a house!

What's the most attractive trait in a man?

Confidence and assertiveness.

Least attractive?

Unintelligence.

What's the most important accomplishment of your life so far?

Gaining and maintaining my independence.

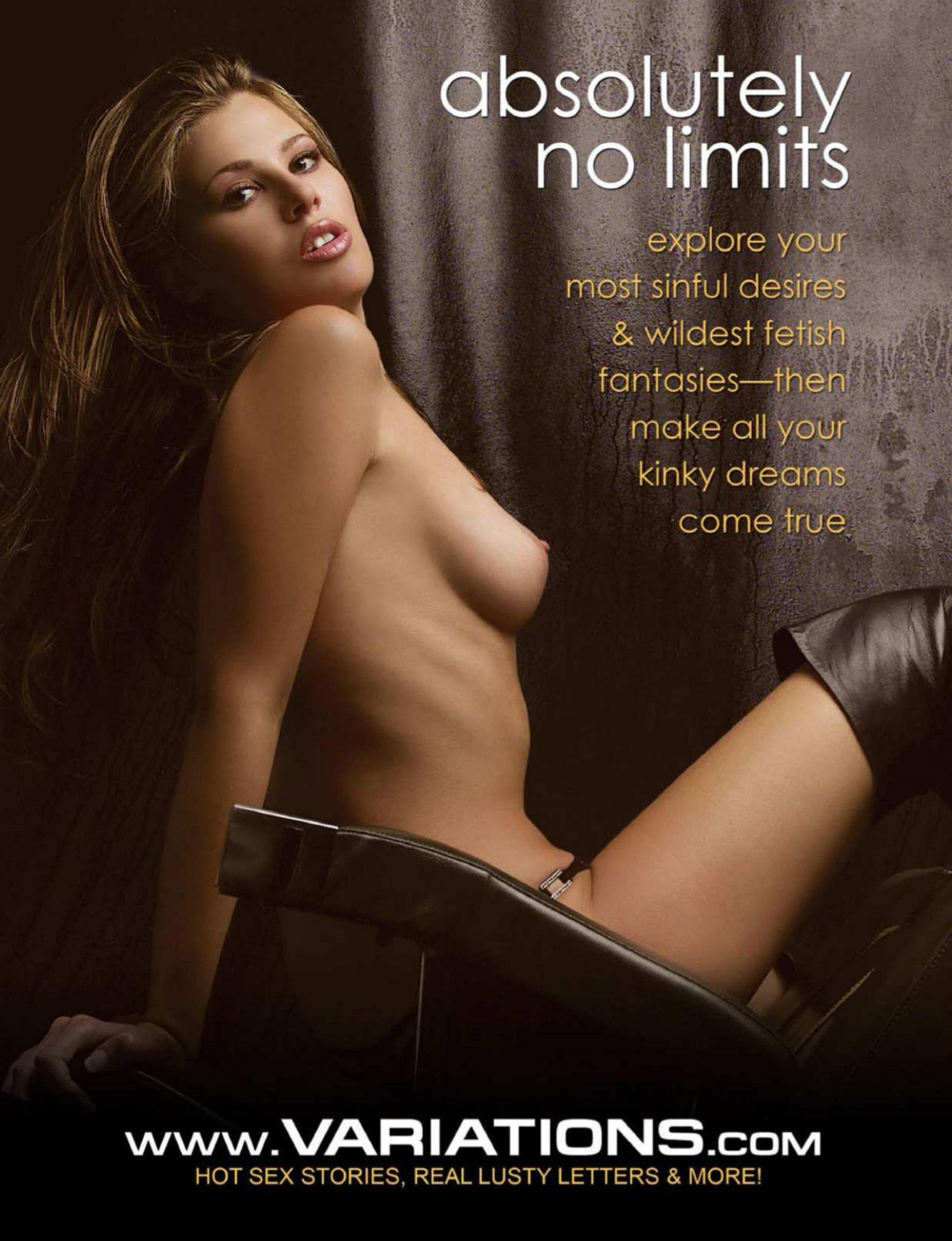
How do you like to relax?

I love yoga, swimming, and spending time with my family.

Fuck, Marry, Kill: Pop Star Edition. GO!

I'd fuck Bill Dess, marry Alina Baraz, and I wouldn't kill anybody. Ha!

SEE MORE OF ALINA AT PENTHOUSE.COM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CLASS TIME FOR JOHNS

THE "STOP-DEMAND" APPROACH TO PROSTITUTION MAKES MEN PAY THE PRICE.

BY ELLE HARDY

I'M in Brazos County, Texas, in a roadside motel room colored by the soft light of *Bowhunter* on the TV and a collection of police-issue iPhones.

"I know what the eggplant emoji *is,*" says one of the detectives in the twin-bed room, referring to an oft-used sexting symbol, "but do we know if the prosecutors will take it as an agreement for sex?"

As we wait, they give me a chance to write my own guesses on the operation whiteboard: the number of johns they'll bust today, and of those busted, how many will cry, possess drugs, carry unlicensed guns, and have outstanding warrants. But before I finish, I'm interrupted by cheering plainclothed officers. *Bowhunter*'s Mike Carney has nailed a musk ox in the heart.

"He's coming," crackles a police radio moments later, and the room comes alive.

I follow the officer in charge, Sergeant Paul Mahoney, into the bathroom, where he and his largest officer strap on their gun holsters and select a pair of handcuffs from a neat row. Two other detectives wait silently behind the motel-room door, which is soon opened by a female cop, a tiny, bird-like woman in jeans and ill-suiting makeup, looking vaguely like the blurry online photo they posted offering her sexual services.

"Come in," she says with a huge smile. The john puts his second foot inside the room and is jumped on and cuffed by four police officers.

Within seconds, I hear one of the officers mutter, "Fuck, he's pissed himself."

The other johns arrested that day would yell and struggle, or holler that they weren't going to fight, but Fernando stands quietly as the cops search his pockets, his fear spreading across the front of his work trousers.

Gene, the male cop Fernando had been unwittingly sexting with, asks him why he'd been so stupid. In response, Fernando says softly, "I got to live with what happened," his wet pants sticking to his legs. He goes on to politely answer questions about his wife, two jobs, and two toddlers back home.

Pissing himself will be the first in a series of humiliations for Fernando, and thousands of guys like him caught in john stings around the country. His mug shot, name, and engagement in "sex crimes" are splashed on the local news that evening, and will live on the internet forever. Fernando is another casualty in the war on sex, part of the fallout from a moral panic that is destroying lives in order to save them.

■■■

A WEEK after Fernando's arrest, I'm in a church basement in downtown Waco, Texas, with 11 more johns busted while attempting to procure sex. They avoid each other's gaze, just as they avoid, even more carefully, the eyes of the man standing before them.

"This won't be a hug-athon," Brett Mills, coordinator of an anti-prostitution program—a "john school"—says to a field of lowered baseball caps. "We're kind, but we're not faint of heart."

Mills has been running this john school—a mandatory education program for men convicted of first-time solicitation offenses—since 2014, part of the Jesus Said Love (JSL) not-for-profit organization he runs with his wife, Emily.

Mills reads out the class rules: sleepers and phone checkers get one warning before being asked to leave. Same goes for anyone drunk, high, or late. Mills then instructs the johns to "own their story" by sharing how they were arrested, but without protesting their innocence.

Each john had to pay $525 for the privilege of attending this class, part of their misdemeanor penalty for online solicitation of a prostitute. They were arrested during multiple police stings across several Texas counties. Of the johns in the room, seven are Latino and one is Asian; all eight are blue-collar workers. The three white guys are active-duty military personnel.

Brett Mills commands the room, smoothly shifting from cool youth-group leader to drill sergeant. Speaking forcefully, he says, "There are eight women in our [JSL] office right now that have been perpetrated on by guys like you!" Jesus Said Love is primarily focused on helping "janes" leave the commercial sex industry, and its john schools, which teach that women should not be bought and sold, have become a core part of that mission. It doesn't hurt that these schools have become a lucrative business and attract significant political support.

Unable to shrink any further inside himself, Tanner is called on to share his story. He's a tall, thin, 24-year-old from suburban Dallas. While others fidget and down energy drinks, Tanner only clenches his fists around the sides of his T-shirt, his eyelids at half-mast.

**The names of johns have been changed.*

BACKGROUND PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY SMIT

PHOTO BY ELLE HARDY

"I DON'T GIVE A FUCK ABOUT YOUR FACE ON THE NEWS," BRETT MILLS BARKS. "I CARE ABOUT THESE WOMEN!"

"I just wanted to talk to a female face before being stuck in a box," he says of the day he was arrested, a short time before he was due to be deployed overseas. "I tried to call and got a text back. I thought it was weird, but I just wanted to see a woman. Then these two guys are comin' at me. I tried to fight back; they didn't ID as cops. There was no video or audio surveillance—it all seems kind of sketchy to me."

Mills asks the johns who had their mug shots posted on local TV news. They all raise their hands. "And on Facebook, everyone saw it on Facebook," Tanner adds quietly.

"I don't give a fuck about your face on the news, I care about these women!" Mills barks, telling me later that he calls these "front-end alignment moments."

If Mills had his way, the class would cost twenty times more so that the johns would feel the true weight of their crime. The average DUI costs in excess of $10,000 when impounding, fines, court, and attorney fees are taken into account. Even then, Mills says, the crimes are not equivalent: driving drunk is nothing like trying to *buy* a human being.

"And don't tell me that legalization is the way to go," he adds. "The only one who wins there are the regulators, 'cause they get the money. Go to a bar and meet someone!"

Before we break for lunch, we meet Sheronda and Jackie, two of JSL's presenters, who share stories and information. Some of what they relate is shocking. Sheronda used to rob johns, we learn. She ran away from home after being sexually abused by her stepfather, and later used to pose as a prostitute and make off with would-be johns' money and cars.

Jackie, a nurse at the state health department, wheels out a projector for a stomach-churning slideshow of the worst effects of untreated STDs in men and women. She offers free swabbings to the johns as they filter outside. Several of them complain they've lost their appetite for lunch.

A number of the guys share cigarettes and laughs, but I notice Tanner walking anxiously around the parking lot, painfully alone. He doesn't want to talk about what happened, but soon the words rush out anyway. "I just want it all behind me," he says. "I hope that this is the end."

Tanner was arrested with 30 others in a sting at a motel near the Fort Hood military base. Local media ran his mug shot and a report that he was found in possession of a knife, six lengths of rope, duct tape, and a body bag. He told deputies he brought the rope to the room because he had a bonding fetish. The other items were found in his car later.

"There was no investigation," Tanner says. "The sheriff told the media that I was a serial killer."

■ ■ ■

NOT long after talking to Tanner, I arrive at the Waco office of the McLennan County sheriff, Parnell McNamara. I'm there to talk to him and his human-trafficking team. Sheriff McNamara greets me with a hug and asks if I want anything to drink. Within minutes, I'm being shown a media highlight reel of the sheriff's greatest law-enforcement triumphs. When we're done, he asks me to pose for photos with his collection of Thompson submachine guns, and hands me an autographed photo and merchandise promoting his reelection campaign, all of it carrying the slogan, "Parnell's Posse: 2020 Vision."

"Some of these guys should have been shot," the sheriff tells

PHOTOS BY ELLE HARDY

A budget motel alongside the I-35, said by advocates to be a major human-trafficking route.

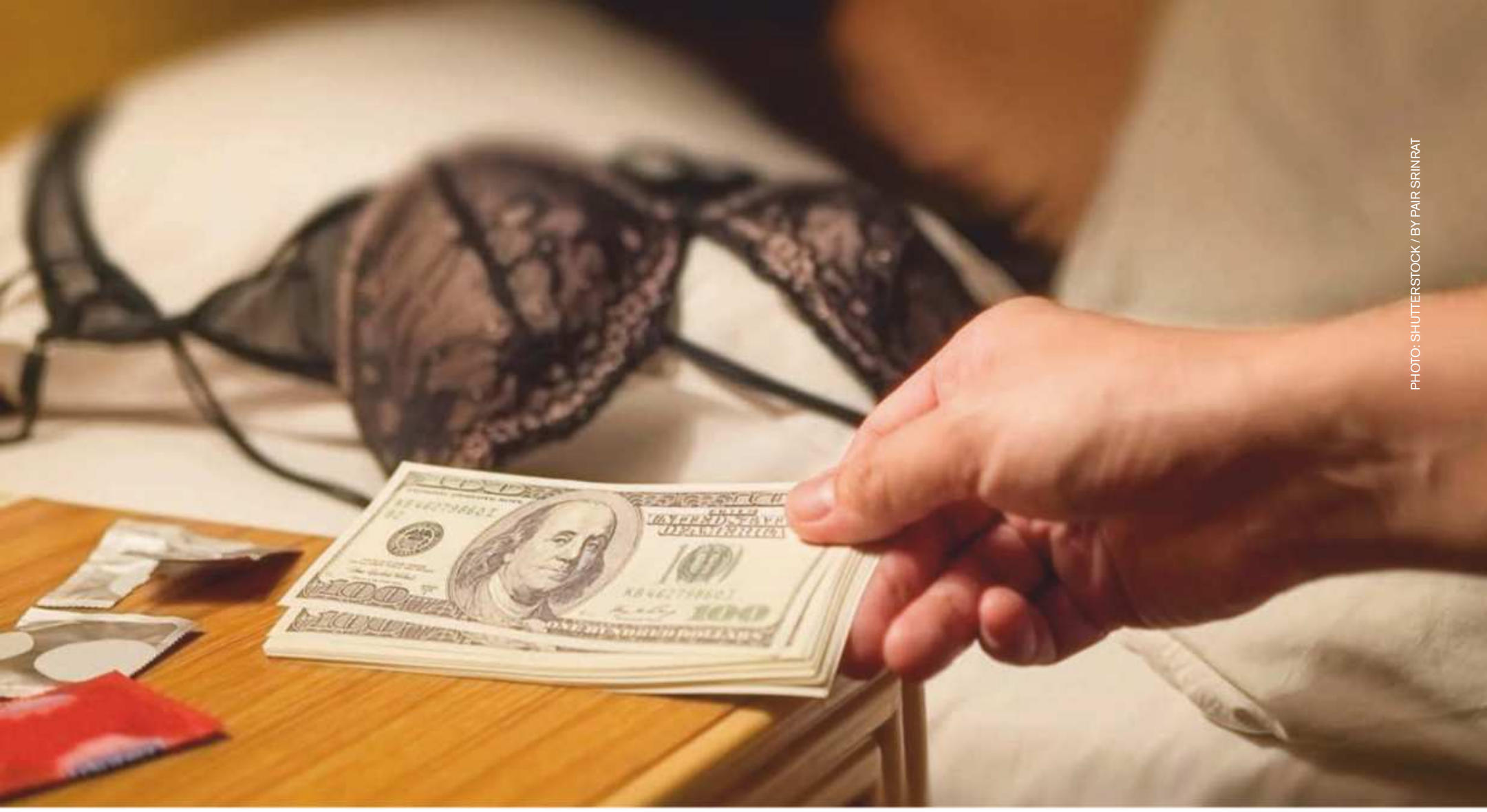


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY PAIR SRINRAT

"SOME OF THESE GUYS SHOULD HAVE BEEN SHOT," THE SHERIFF TELLS ME. "JOHNS ARE THE ROOT OF THE EVIL, CREATING THE DEMAND. IT'S A BIG EFFORT—THE PIMPS, THE JOHNS, THE MOLESTERS ARE ALL IN IT TOGETHER."

me. "Johns are the root of the evil, creating the demand. It's a big effort—the pimps, the johns, the molesters are all in it together." He pauses and asks me to write down the following quote: "Child molesters should be tied to a post and horsewhipped every day." Moving on to a gateway theory of what johns engage in, Sheriff McNamara argues that soliciting women is like the marijuana of sex. "I think prostitution leads to child molestation," he continues. "[Johns] get bored and escalate to something weirder, kinkier."

■■■

SHERIFF McNamara describes himself as a lawman who "just inherited the job." His family on his father's side was a mainstay in Waco law enforcement going all the way back to 1902. His office is a shrine to three generations of the badge—one cabinet alone holds 17 framed photographs and seven guns beneath a scale of justice.

He's something of a Waco legend. That's what happens when you do things like form a posse of old-school lawmen to track down a thief dumb enough to steal a horse belonging to McNamara's daughter. That much-publicized event took place in 1996. More recently, the 70-year-old sheriff was cited as the inspiration for Jeff Bridges' character Marcus Hamilton in the 2016 Academy Award-nominated film *Hell or High Water*. Bridges plays an ornery U.S. marshal not ready to face mandatory retirement at age 57—which is exactly what happened to McNamara after 30-plus years as a Texas deputy marshal.

"You gotta get the right-lookin' hat," McNamara told Bridges, who shadowed the Stetson-loving sheriff to prepare for his role. "If you get a stupid hat, you'll wind up lookin' like Howdy Doody."

To seal their friendship, McNamara "put him in the posse," making Bridges an honorary deputy sheriff, before traveling with the actor to the Oscars ceremony, an experience he recalls almost as fondly as he recounts tales of his law-enforcement career.

McNamara hasn't visited the Jesus Said Love john school, but says of Brett Mills and his wife: "[They're] good, good people, and it's a wonderful program they have. There's a place for them, at least as an attempt to straighten people out."

■■■

IT'S debatable, though, whether john schools—or "stop-demand programs" as they are sometimes called—have any effect beyond humiliation. The first school of its kind was launched in 1981, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, followed by subsequent competing models—one developed by Minneapolis therapist Steve Sawyer, and an acclaimed model pioneered by former San Francisco sex worker Norma Hotaling.

"Norma was extremely shrewd as an advocate," says Michael Shively, an independent researcher who has evaluated john schools extensively for the Justice Department. Hotaling developed a close working relationship with Kamala Harris, then California's attorney general and now a U.S. senator who's considered one of the leading contenders for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination.

"Ideologically, john schools are all over the map," Shively says. "Well under half have any sort of faith-based element. One of their partners is often a charitable organization or something that is really survivor-focused."

In 2011, Texas passed a state law allowing any county or city to create a john school as an alternative to fines or incarceration. As with drunk driving, it is the local prosecutor's decision whether attendance at a john school is required under the misdemeanor charge.

"It's the Wild West, totally unregulated," Shively remarks. "It

is almost impossible to find out whether they work, and there is almost no accountability. The criminal justice system is heavily discretionary—there's a lot of latitude on restitution versus punishment."

Shame is driving so much of this activity. Convicted johns live with the very real possibility of losing their jobs and families, so they rarely fight their cases in court, unable to bear the cost and desperate to put the event behind them. Of course, many of them stand trial regardless on the evening's news, and their shame lives in perpetuity online.

There are roughly 50 john schools in existence nationwide, although it's difficult to say precisely how many are fully operational at any given time. Like other startups, the "moral entrepreneurs" behind these schools have to contend with the flow of supply and demand. Without a doubt, though, it can be a money-maker—fees paid by johns to attend are seen as a key component of the restorative justice philosophy that underpins the movement. And perhaps it goes without saying that it helps if stop-demand operators are backed by local politicians and law enforcement.

Jesus Said Love is a charity financed solely by private donations and revenues from its monthly john school. The year it started the program, revenue jumped from $12,000 to $370,000. Now it averages around $500,000 a year. JSL's annual fund-raising weekend getaway, Wild Torch, is attended by a who's who of local business leaders, church leaders, and political figures, including Sheriff McNamara.

"Marketing is a strength of ours," says Brett Mills in JSL's Waco office, a converted warehouse decorated with chic lamps, lounges, and cowhide rugs in every room. "We're in talks to do a corporate program. A local company approached us after their foreman was arrested in a sting. It had affected their business."

CONVICTED JOHNS LIVE WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF LOSING THEIR JOBS AND FAMILIES, SO THEY RARELY FIGHT THEIR CASES IN COURT, UNABLE TO BEAR THE COST AND DESPERATE TO PUT THE EVENT BEHIND THEM.

If Mills likes to be the balls of the operation, then his wife Emily is the heart. She felt called to work with women in the sex industry 15 years ago or so. She now spends much of her time organizing gift-bag runs to Texas strip clubs (which are hubs for prostitution), providing women with high-quality toiletries as well as resources if they want to leave the business of sex.

"I believe we're divine beings, not for sale. But it doesn't matter in secular terms, and I get that," she says. "Sex is a $3.2 billion industry—look at the economics, look at whose backs it's built on. This country fought a war over slavery as economics. Is that why we're not doing anything? Is it just about money and white-male power?"

Waco is on the I-35 between Austin and Dallas, well within the "Texas Triangle," which Emily and her husband, along with other activists fighting human trafficking, say is one of the nation's hot spots for modern slavery. Using the carefully formed language of social justice, advocates avoid talk of borders and illegals, but the Triangle discussion retains a charge in the current political conditions.

"The mortality rate for trafficking victims is seven years from entry—usually through suicide, violence, and drugs," Emily says, using a frequently-cited but false statistic. "People don't realize that they are victims. We tell them that they are a walking miracle. The victims have to learn to say that they are victims."

Brett Mills adds: "Our philosophy is that we can't condemn. Holding up a bloody fetus is shaming, and it's weird. We treat people with kindness no matter how awful they are to women so that we can get in their ear."

■■■

WHILE Brett and Emily Mills may be hammering home the message to johns, it's evident that the people listening most intently to them are in positions of power. Unbound is one of the largest groups fighting human trafficking in Texas. It works across multiple cities, assisting police in sting operations, monitoring online prostitution ads, and putting together educational programs in schools. It was founded by Waco's powerful Antioch Church and enjoys the support of some Texas megachurches. The head of its Houston chapter, Kerri Taylor, is the wife of a state senator.

Jessica Sicora, head of training at Unbound Waco, told me they believed the incoming Republican district attorney, Barry Johnson, was "going to be a good asset," and "has the right attitude, but needs more education to be accurate."

Sicora gave a 45-minute presentation on human trafficking at Waco's Jesus Said Love john school. "I was on the phone last week with a director of the governor's demand-decrease unit," she told the johns. "They are sitting, waiting, to get a strong enough case to make what you did a felony. It hasn't yet happened in our state, but everyone wants to make it happen. Scaring the hell out of buyers is the best way we can end this industry."

When I ask her after class about her claim that Texas wants to change first-time solicitation charges from a misdemeanor to a felony, Sicora said she was "just spitballing."

Demand Abolition, another organization fighting human trafficking, is looking to work this felony angle on a national scale. The group's founder, Dallas native Swanee Hunt, is a leading Democratic figure, who has raised millions for anti-prostitution activities and programs, including john schools in 11 American cities.

Remarkably, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services lists the contact details for no fewer than 30 different anti-human-trafficking organizations operating in their state—and that's without including Jesus Said Love or Demand Abolition.

"There is [sex] trafficking going on, no question about it—but the stats have been grossly exaggerated, particularly in the United States," says Alison Bass, a West Virginia University journalism professor and author of *Getting Screwed: Sex Workers and the Law*.

Bass recently uncovered financial ties between prosecutors offices and Demand Abolition's multi-city anti-trafficking initiative, CEASE (Cities Empowered Against Sexual Exploitation). In Seattle, the group provided almost $200,000 in funding to the King County prosecutor's office over four years. In return, law enforcement carried out regular john stings, and the prosecutors framed the activities of those johns as sex trafficking.

"If we want to look after women, we need to put our resources into social services resources and housing, not into having them arrested," Bass says, adding that sex work can often provide a living wage—which can't always be said for women working in

restaurants or cleaning houses, particularly in big cities.

"Everyone says they're going after the big guys, as they should be, but it's the small fish that are being targeted—both the sex workers and the clients themselves," Bass explains.

Ayesha, a 30-year-old sex worker who has been working the Texas Triangle for 15 years, says she was recently arrested for the first time. "I got caught in a sting in Dallas," she tells me. "They didn't want to let me go. It was the FBI's human-trafficking squad. They were trying to make me say that I was a victim. I'm like, look at me, check my demeanor—I don't look like I'm being forced."

A Texas native, she ran away from home at 14 because she didn't get along with her grandmother, who became Ayesha's caretaker after her parents were both incarcerated for low-level drug offenses. "I'm done," she remarks. "It's not how it used to be—stress-free—with the police and all. And there's a lot of violence, there's girls getting raped—those are the guys they should go hard on."

Ayesha counts a former sheriff among her mostly older, white clientele, but points to mug shots of her colleagues and clients to illustrate who is actually being arrested. For her, full legalization of sex is the only way forward—not least because fucking is only a small part of her work. "A lot of my guys can't perform," she says. Many of them just want company, as Tanner said he did.

The operation that nabbed Tanner shows that beyond not-for-profit organizations pushing anti-prostitution policies nationwide, local law enforcement agencies are reaching out across jurisdictional borders to crack down on commercial sex.

Stings are increasingly focused on johns rather than janes, usually by police posting ads on foreign websites that were set up in the wake of the U.S. government shutting down Backpage, the major online sex-advertising site.

"EVERYONE SAYS THEY'RE GOING AFTER THE BIG GUYS, AS THEY SHOULD BE, BUT IT'S THE SMALL FISH THAT ARE BEING TARGETED—BOTH THE SEX WORKERS AND THE CLIENTS THEMSELVES."

Tanner's arrest—and subsequent trial by television—was part of a Bell County show-and-tell operation, an on-the-job training exercise for officers from other counties. Sergeant Mahoney, whom I accompanied on a sting that day in Brazos County, was there.

"We arrested a lot of johns that day, but I remember Tanner," he says. "I was on surveillance. I saw that he had put his big bowie knife on his hip. They dunked him pretty hard 'cause they knew about this knife."

"He was a squirrelly dude," Mahoney continues. "I remember after they arrested him, he wouldn't tell them his name, wouldn't say he was buyin'. Maybe he wasn't going to kidnap her. I don't know."

Sheriff McNamara was jubilant after Tanner's bust, telling local papers, "I'm so proud of Bell County for jumping on the bandwagon." The Bell County Sheriff's Department had learned everything they knew from McNamara's McLennan County team, which began conducting stings as a part of the first "Johns Suppression Initiative" in 2014.

Speaking to cameras at the end of the initiative, McNamara used the phrase "weird sickos," which was picked up nationally, and a law-and-order star was born. Today, he invites television crews to his many busts, and has been working on his catchphrases. During our chat, he appears to riff on Tolstoy when I ask him why people buy sex: "There are all sorts of excuses, like unhappy homes. But there's no excuse for someone like *that*."

■ ■ ■

IN 2015, buoyed by the effectiveness of cross-county prostitution busts, McNamara started another posse of a kind, called FAST—Fugitive, Apprehension, and Special Tasks. What he calls his "personal SEAL team" is "runnin' and gunnin' day and night," powered by homeland security clearances that allow them more or less free rein to conduct operations all over the country.

The FAST unit spends much of its time chasing down pimps. Their work has taken them all the way to Las Vegas and New York City. Recently, they tracked down a Waco brothel owner in Dallas.

A 90-minute drive from Waco, the Big D, though no Austin in terms of its politics, is less deep-red than most other parts of the state. Republicans such as Sheriff McNamara see the city as a blot on the moral landscape of Texas, a place where pimps, prostitutes, and illegals run the streets and threaten old-fashioned values.

The day had barely broken over the city, but Kimberly Duran didn't care. She was too busy administering a wake-up call to 13 johns, her voice stronger than any coffee. Duran is the program clinician at the Dallas County District Attorney's Office, and waking johns up is part of her job.

"I wanna fuck you up for your next buy," she begins. "I know some of you will go back, but I hope I've fucked you up."

If the church-basement john school was airless, this place just feels grim. We're next-door to the morgue in a row of dull bureaucratic buildings.

"Dallas is a mess, the john class is terrible," Brett Mills had warned me. "Theirs is $250 on a Saturday with a payment plan. There shouldn't be no payment plan—and johns should have to take a day off [from work]."

The johns are a familiar bunch—four African-Americans and nine Latinos, with some of the men wearing factory uniforms. I see a lot of tattoo sleeves. Their stories are notably similar, too, most involving this basic scenario: They were at a gas station and a pretty girl offered her services for $20, and wouldn't take no for an answer.

Fifty-something Joe, a soldier turned trucker, says his bust was entrapment. A detective from the human-trafficking unit, who is there to answer questions, begs to differ, saying it is only entrapment if the female cop put a gun to his head, demanding he comply. To which Joe replies, "No, that's a fucking robbery!"

Duran softens a little, and says that she wants the johns to think of the day as a behavioral therapy session. Her class presenters lack the TED-talk snappiness of the ones in Waco. It isn't quite the hug-athon Brett had prepared me for—it's just incredibly boring.

The Dallas class mostly mirrored Waco's program in terms of instructional agenda until the end of the session. That's when three white guys from Sex Addicts Anonymous—all named Brian—take the johns through how the 12-step program saved their lives.

"We're not here for addiction, we don't need treatment," Luis, 43, protests. Adding his own comment, Joe shouts, "The treatment was when I came in here and paid $250!" Everyone

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY JACK DAGLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

laughs except the Brians.

After the laughter dies down, Duran tells the johns, "You know, the governor is trying to get y'all on the sex-offender registry." At this point, the Brians leave, but the johns stay behind to ask questions, including whether they would be able to see their kids if they were to be put on this registry.

Duran didn't say that for rhetorical effect. Earlier this year, Texas governor Greg Abbott began an anti-prostitution law and order campaign, saying that "anyone who commits these crimes should be behind bars." Under his proposal, "sex criminals" would be incarcerated and forced to register as sex offenders upon their release, while the minimum age for workers at sexually oriented businesses like strip clubs would be raised from 18 to 21.

"We've seen a lot of bills introduced in line with the end-demand philosophy, which also prop up civil forfeiture, and this is already a really sketchy business, and technically illegal in the United States," says Christa Daring, executive director of the Sex Workers Outreach Program, founded in the Bay Area in 2003. In civil forfeiture, the government takes possession of property suspected to be part of a crime. Adds Daring: "Legislation we're seeing being introduced could result in people having their cars seized if they [don't] pay their john-school fines of only $250."

It's clear to me that police operations are targeting a certain type of john. In 2012, Rachel Lovell of DePaul University studied mug shots taken by the Chicago Police Department in the preceding two years. Lovell found that almost all of their stings took place in poor, African-American neighborhoods, targeting clients of street-based sex workers. Over 85 percent of the men arrested were African-American or Latino.

Luis, who objected to one of the john-school Brians telling him he was a sex addict, agrees. "I grew up in south Dallas," he tells me. "I know it's where they do most of their surveillance and stings. Prostitution is more discreet in higher-class neighborhoods, but it goes on. There's just more palms being greased."

To escape having to sit through another STD horror show, I made my excuses at the Dallas john school, and went for a drive to clear my head. As I traveled the city streets, my thoughts kept circling back to the realization that end-demand policies—and programs like the ones I'd witnessed in recent days—appeared to be the next big thing in law and order.

Moral panic takes many forms, and sex is its current obsession. With marijuana legalization, the prison industry can no longer rely on weed smokers to fill their cells, so it's looking to sex offenders—and that's the classification johns will increasingly be tagged with—to pick up the slack.

Right now, there's not much public outcry over this. But the fact is, people are having their lives turned upside down for doing things like unwittingly sexting cops. John-school alumnus Tanner is effectively in hiding, jobless, and living with his parents, understandably struggling after being publicly branded a would-be serial killer.

Meanwhile, Brett Mills is searching for a repentant john to round out his school's curriculum. That is, an ex-john repentant enough to join his JSL team. There is no one better equipped to counsel the sex-addicted than a former addict, and the number of jobs that sex addicts are welcome to apply for are few. The only option, then, is for humiliated johns to turn pro—to become part of the system that destroyed them.

Elle Hardy is a writer wandering the southern United States. She hails from Australia and has reported from countries like North Korea and Turkmenistan, but lately America has her affection and attention.

WOMEN OF THE GUN

HOW THE INTERNET IS RESHAPING THE GUN-RIGHTS LANDSCAPE.

BY ART TAVANA

WITH flawlessly manicured dark-red fingernails, @Kayotickat holds the steel frame of a single-action Browning 1911-22 pistol. It's an archaic gun with a tobacco-colored grip, yet it looks vogue in her hand. The close-up photo, posted on Instagram, gets its charge from a traditionally phallic pose (a gripped pistol) feminized by @Kayotickat's dangerous flirtation, like a femme fatale handling a cold piece of twentieth-century engineering.

This juxtaposition is the future of gun advertising for Americans raised on the internet—those millions who don't read gun magazines and never visit a newspaper stand (if they even know where to find one). Instagram is where you'll also find a photo showing an attractive young woman in a floral-print skirt that she's lifted to reveal her thigh—and the SIG Sauer P238 holstered tightly to it.

The SIG appears in several photos taken by shooting-range safety officer Lisa Brianne, who executes yoga positions with the pistol, uses the gun as a lingerie prop, and holsters it over her patriotic leggings—all while using hashtags like #GunPorn. These images are politically provocative. Brianne is sexualizing her relationship with her firearm. She's inviting you into her bedroom to play with her gun. And she's how I'm familiar with the SIG.

PERUSE the latest issues of gearhead-focused gun magazines and you'll find an austere, industrial, mostly sexless aesthetic. The masculine-feminine power dynamics of gun culture are muted in publications like *American Handgunner,* which favor centerfolds showing stand-alone firearms and their accessories (though a recent rise in concealed-carry permits secured by women has produced the occasional photo of a midriff-baring woman holstering a Glock).

There have been exceptions to this hardware-centric approach, like the photos of syndicated radio host and Second Amendment activist Dana Loesch in a black dress and goth ankle boots, wielding her AR-15 in the pages of *Guns & Ammo* in 2015. Loesch was the first woman to appear on the cover in 54 years. But this is not the norm. Gun magazines cater to their most reliable demographic—traditionalists in flyover country who view guns as self-defense power tools or recreational toys. Loesch, a right-wing vamp wearing Alexander Wang, simultaneously appeals to both Midwestern moms and heavy-metal fanboys. She's a cultural bump stock in a movement that's inspired conservative women to transform into gimlet-eyed Bond girls. These dark, icy, and chic spitfire dames are the future of Second Amendment activism.

Trinity Merrill is one of the millennials redefining the "gun gaze" on Instagram. She's a plucky Second Amendment activist who poses in front of the flag and models for pro-military brands like Warrior Flasks. She frequents shooting ranges in Ozark, Missouri, on "Tactical Tuesdays," wearing cutoff denim shorts with sponsored safety glasses and earplugs. She's a gun-rights pinup girl, happy to scandalize those liberals who view guns with prejudice and paranoia.

Defiant women like Merrill, who has 125,000 followers on Instagram, are featured on wildly popular Instagram channels like @bassbucksandbabes, @pretty_girls_with_guns, and @country_bombshells. The bombshells account boasts 273,000 followers, an apparel line, and an endless stream of photographed conservative amazons who lift weights and comfortably handle the dead carcasses of big game.

Joining Merrill in contributing to this increasingly influential universe of girls-with-guns online imagery is the expert archer and outdoor enthusiast Katie Van Slyke, a gun-holster model who can be seen on "Freedom Holsters" Instagram page with a teal Glock 42 holstered safely near her crotch, an image accompanied by the hashtag "Glock Porn."

The pose is an act of social rebellion. One very similar to it was widely mocked by liberals in March when Fox News host Tomi Lahren posted a photo of herself with a 9mm tucked into her leggings. "Not Your Average Gun Girl," read the hashtag. In the case of Lahren, a blonde conservative woman with a prominent media profile, she knew how much flak the image would receive and was ready to revel in the outrage.

Kirsten Joy Weiss commands the most-watched female guns channel on YouTube. While just as physically striking as Lahren, Weiss is more of a gun gaze's Ronda Rousey. She's a gifted trick shooter and multi-title champion whose videos—like a YouTube Annie Oakley—show the sporting side of firearm partisanship. Weiss is a woman able to outshoot most of her male competition. Rather than flirting with gun rights like Lahren, Weiss is demonstrating her prowess as a sharpshooter—the best argument to counter the liberal bias against Americans who engage in shooting sports.

INSTAGRAM, the digital playpen of the prized millennial demographic, is the unintentional industry leader of gun porn. There's no data on what sort of impact these photos have. The vagaries of gun statistics in the U.S., especially on the internet, make them

ILLUSTRATION: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY KATREVICH VALERIY

increasingly irrelevant, but we know that more women are engaging with firearms. We know that more women are frequenting shooting ranges, and acquiring those concealed-carry permits. We also know that more women are photographing themselves in defiant poses with their firearms.

For the libidinous American male, these images offer a voyeuristic fetish stapled on top of fine print that's far more important—the conservative woman's newly adopted role as defender of adventurist masculinity.

Social media is where these Second Amendment bodyguards boldly talk back to the anti-gun feminists of millennial media. Social media is where one woman named Jackie, who defies feminist homogeneity, has an apparel sponsor, and can be seen holding an AK-47 in each hand, wearing a "Right 2A Bear Arms" T-shirt in front of a big fucking truck. Don't look for the mainstream media to tell her story.

Fierce feminists like another woman named Tara, a glamorous and "savage" U.S. Marine who extinguishes the fiction of unattractive female soldiers, are part of a DIY network of women ignored by liberal media outlets because, the argument goes, they are "complicit" in a culture alarmists contend produces mass shootings. This is the same poor logic that blamed first-person shooter games and Marilyn Manson for the Columbine shooting.

While liberal puritans treat masculine, gun-themed pastimes as acts of terror, conservative women use them like credit cards exchanging in cultural currency.

Valerie Serbu, aka @50calval, the self-described "heiress" to the Serbu Firearms fortune, confidently plays with her sensuality behind colossal, magazine-fed, semi-automatic rifles (or homemade flamethrowers) in videos that not only amuse men on YouTube, but sell them guns.

Serbu's ALS ice-bucket challenge video showed her firing a machine gun in a pink bikini. Her @50calval account is as much a middle finger to bourgeois liberalism as a satirical YouTube video of teenager Carly Lacroix, a Southerner who hilariously mocked a male *New York Daily News* reporter after he claimed to experience PTSD upon firing an AR-15.

The gun gaze is not exclusive to U.S. gun culture. In Japan, airsoft hobbyists like Isis Osushi take stirring fashion photos at "shooting cafes," cosplaying as Milla Jovovich from *Resident Evil* and blending gaming culture with toy guns, creating their own, slightly nerdier Nintendo-gun gaze. The Russian Federation uses the gaze as a recruitment tool in the form of cosplaying soldier Elena Deligioz, whose 62,000 Instragram followers are drawn to the glam photos of her in full combat gear, or napping under an arsenal of machine guns. Deligioz is alluring because she's the ultimate betrayal of everything we believe in—the gun gaze equivalent of infidelity.

In America, where the gun gaze began with cowgirls like Oakley and pistol-packin' Hollywood molls like Peggy Cummins (who starred in 1949's *Gun Crazy,* robbing banks with her boyfriend, always itching to pull the trigger), the gaze now produces the effect of seeing Doris Day wearing an ammo belt, instead of a stitched apron. It slays domesticity with playbacks to images like the character of Sarah Connor from *Terminator 2,* posing with a cigarette dangling from her lip—the M16 assault rifle acting as an extension of her take-no-shit personality.

Today's women of the gun are unapologetic, never compromising sex appeal for gender neutrality or blindfolded misandry. They take something masculine and phallic and rub rouge all over it, pumping it full of roaring estrogen. The new gun gaze isn't the bikinied, machine-gun babes from the 1980s VHS tapes. It's a defiant throwback to first-wave feminism, but far more rebellious, where conservative women are taking ownership of the male gaze, instead of being wrecked by it.

Art Tavana is a journalist and political pundit at Playboy and a former pop culture columnist at L.A. Weekly. He's currently authoring a history of Guns N' Roses and contributing to National Review.

CAMPUS CULTURE WARRIORS REJECT CULTURE

BY ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ

CULTURE wars often begin on university campuses. In the 1930s, book burning was common on German campuses. During the late 1940s and early 50s, McCarthyism thrived on American campuses. Today, hard-left extremism is rewarded by radical faculty and students.

Today's campus culture wars feature attempts to censor "politically incorrect" (a term devised by Stalinist culture warriors in the 1920s and 30s) speakers—a broad category that includes conservatives, free-speech liberals, and centrist supporters of Israel. I know, because my talks have been protested at Johns Hopkins, the University of California, and Columbia. Efforts have been made to censor me—a liberal Democrat and centrist Zionist who supports the two-state solution and opposes Israel's settlement policies.

Among the worst campuses in the world is Vassar College, which once boasted an excellent academic reputation but now is home to many faculty members and students who reject education and demand that hard-left propaganda be taught in classrooms. No longer is the object to teach students how to think; the current goal of the culture warriors of the hard left is to tell them *what* to think. And the "what" includes intolerance of dissenting views, rejection of the free market, and an abhorrence of American culture and values.

At the beginning of the current academic year, a group of Vassar students distributed a hard-left "disorientation guide" that advocated violent resistance to the "white supremacist, cisheteropatriarchal, capitalist values" of the Vassar "corporation." The document called for students to "host a Molotov cocktail-making workshop" to "disrupt alumni fund-raising events," and to "slap a Zionist." It singled out a Jewish trustee for his support of Israel, and demanded that the university become "tied" to Palestinian resistance "as comrades in the struggle against racism [and] cisheteropatriarchy." Whatever that concocted word means, it certainly would seem to include the anti-gay, anti-transgender, and pro-patriarchy actions of Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian Authority. But facts never get in the way of hard-left (or hard-right) extremist ideologies. In fact, the guide berates Vassar for building a science center rather than "funding racial awareness."

Nor are the students interested in "dialogue." Instead they want to "control" or "destroy Vassar."

The students who distributed this guide learned well from their professors. As Ziva Dahl, who studied political science at Vassar, put it: "[I]n terms of its progressive curriculum and faculty, Vassar College now reaps what it has sown—partly due to some members of the faculty who espouse a postmodern ideology that attacks traditional Western values, divides the world into the powerful and powerless, and radicalizes students against the supposed evils of colonialism, capitalism, and white privilege. Some of the curriculum glorifies revolution and the fight against oppression. Students are marinated in identity politics…."

The campus is the training ground for our future leaders, and although Vassar may be among the most extreme battlefields of the one-sided culture war currently being waged on campuses, it is not alone. Similar disorientation guides and radical curricula are all too common on campuses around the country, where propaganda substitutes for education and where dissenting views are punished by downgrading and peer pressure. This is a dangerous phenomenon whose effect can already be seen in the mainstream media and political culture wars that have weakened the center and emboldened the extremes.

The tolerant center—traditional liberals and conservatives—must reclaim its role in education, politics, and the media. America had been blessed by the absence of intolerant extremists from our mainstream. This blessing is under siege by radical faculty, students, and recent alumni who seek to destroy our culture and replace it with what they call "progressive" values, but which, in reality, are repressive in the extreme. Their heroes are not Jefferson, Madison, and Roosevelt, but Stalin, Mao, and Ho Chi Minh. For many of them, the open marketplace of ideas is simply another capitalist tool designed to favor the well-educated, those who can garner factual support, and those who can articulate their arguments in a manner that makes them persuasive. Why do we need a marketplace if there is only one truth, and the radical left has a monopoly on it?

We must win the culture war against these uncultured censors, or we will lose America.

Alan M. Dershowitz is the Felix Frankfurter Professor of Law Emeritus at Harvard Law School and author of "The Case Against Impeaching Trump." Follow him at @AlanDersh or on Facebook @AlanMDershowitz

ORIGINAL PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY MIKHAIL BAKUNOVICH

SPORTS IN A VOLATILE AGE

FOOTBALL, POLITICS, AND BASEBALL'S SEVENTH-INNING STRETCH.

BY PHIL HANRAHAN

EARLY this century, Rush Limbaugh was hired by ESPN and Dennis Miller sat beside Al Michaels in the *Monday Night Football* booth. Limbaugh's gig–which lasted a month–tasked him with talking about Peyton Manning and Brett Favre, Michael Strahan and Derrick Brooks, on ESPN's *NFL Sunday Countdown* show. Whatever your politics–whether you love Limbaugh and Miller, hate them, or have no opinion at all–the fact that a conservative radio titan and a political satirist who leans right could score these elite sports-commentary posts might provoke a moment's reflection. It did for me, at least, when the memory bubbled up.

Could something like this happen today? Even typing the question makes me think of that dark, despairing laughter at the end of Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Cask of Amontillado." It makes me wish I could insert a gif of someone violently shaking their head with a sardonic smile. Imagine the uproar if Limbaugh got the call to join Randy Moss and Charles Woodson and Co. on the 2018 version of *Countdown*. Imagine the amount of crap ESPN would take if they decided it was time for a Dennis Miller sequel in the *MNF* booth.

Now, you might say, "I take your point about Limbaugh. America had to have been a little calmer for Rush to join *Countdown* after what had been 15 straight years of crushing liberals and mocking the Clintons. But Miller? In 2000, he was years away from touring the country with Bill O'Reilly and appearing weekly on Fox News' *The O'Reilly Factor*."

This is true. However, when Miller joined Al Michaels and Dan Fouts on Monday nights, he'd already made his political sympathies known. For example, in 1995, while talking to *USA Today*, the comedian stated, "On most issues, between Clinton and Newt Gingrich, I'd choose Newt in a second."

Three years before that, in a *New York Times* interview, Miller called himself "essentially conservative" and said he'd pulled the lever for George H.W. Bush, not Michael Dukakis, the Democratic presidential candidate, in 1988.

Then there were his standup bits, his political riffs, delivered on stages and on his early-nineties HBO show, later enshrined in a best-selling 1996 book, *The Rants*.

"I've had it up to here with this PC shit!" Miller said to laughter on his show, a line printed verbatim in his book. He continued: "Why can't we laugh at ourselves? Why, when a comedian does a joke on anything even vaguely controversial, do certain people moan like somebody let one rip during an audience with the Pope? I mean, come on.... Who is responsible for that? Well, quite frankly, I'm pinning it on the gays."

That last joke alone might doom his *MNF* chances today. (For the record, Miller, a self-declared libertarian, had this to say in 2004: "If two gay guys want to get married, it's none of my business. I could care less. More power to them. I'm happy when people fall in love." And in 2006, he stated to Penn Jillette, "I'm for gay marriage.")

And even if Miller was able to win the gig, how long would he last, in the age of #MeToo, making jokes like this in the booth, "*That receiver was as wide open as Annabel Chong!*" Chong, you might remember, was a porn actress known for gang bangs.

The climate's just too hot. Those five words right there can get you into an argument these days, whether the issue is our political culture or global temperatures.

Of course, when it comes to sports, there has long been friction fierce enough to send flames back and forth between professional athletics and society at large. Think of Jackie Robinson and Bill Russell on the race-relations front. And Muhammad Ali protesting the Vietnam War. And Billie Jean King striving for economic parity in women's tennis.

But we've never quite seen a situation where dudes are not only burning their Nikes because of an ad campaign starring an unemployed quarterback, but one where a sitting U.S. president can get a pro sports superstar or even an entire sport in bad odor with millions of Americans simply by hitting the blue "Tweet" button on his phone.

And when it comes to conflagration potential, things are just as supercharged on the left side of the political divide. Thought experiment: Conjure an America exactly like today's, with one exception. In this alternate reality, Rush Limbaugh hadn't been hired by ESPN in 2003, and hadn't resigned for remarks many construed as racist. Instead, the company announces Limbaugh will be in the booth for the 2019 version of *Monday Night Football*.

We know what would happen next. The Outrage Machine would overheat inside of three minutes. Screens on people's phones would say, "Twitter is overcapacity"–partly because President

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK / BY VIKTORIYA

Trump had already tweeted, *"Now I can watch football again! Rush will be great!"* By noon we'd be seeing images of protestors outside ESPN headquarters in Bristol, Connecticut.

Not to say our culture was chill back at century's start. The Outrage Machine existed, but it didn't have as many thundering turbines. It did rev up when Limbaugh made these comments on *Countdown,* about Philadelphia Eagles QB Donovan McNabb:

"I think the media has been very desirous that a black quarterback do well. They're interested in black coaches and black quarterbacks doing well.... He got a lot of credit for the performance of his team that he really didn't deserve. The defense carried this team."

But the machine wasn't so strong that it could deny Dennis Miller—that brilliant, caustic, PC-destroying Pittsburgh native—the *MNF* job. That's my Exhibit A. Exhibit B? A little bit of *Monday Night Football* trivia: Had Miller said no to the gig, it might have gone to Rush Limbaugh himself. Yup, he was a finalist, along with sportswriter Tony Kornheiser.

And for my last exhibit, I turn to baseball and Carlos Delgado. In 2004, to protest the Iraq War, Puerto Rico-born Delgado, a first baseman destined to slug 473 home runs before hanging up his cleats, decided to remain seated in the dugout during seventh-inning-stretch renditions of "God Bless America," instead of standing with fellow Blue Jays, ball cap over heart. He did this for three months before anyone noticed. There was no uproar. There was no turning his protest into a political football.

When the *New York Times* contacted then-baseball commissioner Bud Selig, the guy who instituted this patriotic ritual after 9/11, asking for a Delgado comment, Selig didn't know what the reporter was talking about. "You actually startled me," he told the sportswriter.

Delgado continued his protest the rest of the season. The modest amount of media coverage that began in July did result in some fans booing him, and some sports-radio talkers suggested the slugger should "shut up and play." But it didn't go beyond that.

Two years later, the Mets signed him. The team asked Delgado to end his protest, and he agreed. His point was made. A minor controversy faded away.

Now it's almost forgotten.

It would be different today.

URBAN OASIS

Our December CyberCutie Gabbi Mayo seems like your typical girl next door. She comes across as a mild-mannered Californian with a golden tan and beautiful eyes, but once you get to know her, the freaky tomboy comes out. Gabbi loves skateboarding and conspiracy theories. She's broken as many bones as she has erected boners, and she's really into her laid-back, beach-bum lifestyle. We had a feeling she'd be right at home surrounded by lush, green plants and bohemian wicker. We were right.

Photography: Thom & Jheri

Hair & Makeup: Renee Parry • Styling & Wardrobe: Mish Barber-Way • Lighting: Jay Mourad

GABBI MAYO

Vital Stats:

34B-25-34

26 years old

5'3"

You can mirror-write. How did you master that odd little party trick?

My high school art teacher challenged us to pick a phrase and write it backwards. Most of my classmates struggled while I had an end product right away. Then I started using it as a way of writing in "code" in my journals. Now I make weird art that I constantly rotate as I add to it so that the final product is orientation-neutral—as in, no matter which way it's looked at, it will look like a different picture.

Speaking of party tricks, tell me about your spit talents.

Ah! My spit talents. I started practicing as a kid and found I could do spit bubbles. I liked to practice in public because of the repulsive looks I would get. To this day, I have this obsession with incorporating slightly offensive things into my act. Everybody obsesses over whatever offends others. I welcome the bashing.

Do you get any spit fetishists in your cam room?

I get a few, but not as many as I'd like. I have converted quite a few people into drool advocates, but it's always more fun when they're already getting off on it.

What do you love most about skateboarding?

I love skateboarding because it's challenging and frustrating and it just feels fucking great. It provides me with just the right amount of adrenaline and also a reality check when I get too confident and fuck myself up really bad. I love skater culture and how cool skateboarders are. They seem too cool! It's off-putting until you strike up a conversation. We are actually very accepting, easygoing, and great at having a good time.

What is the one thing you can't live without?

I can't live without my Vitamix. I make smoothies for breakfast and lunch every day because I despise chewing. It's an easy way to deliver all those macronutrients to my body with minimal effort. What can I say? I'm lazy and hate deciding what to eat.

How many bones have you broken?

I broke my thumb doing a terribly planned roundoff when I was still in grade school. More recently, I broke both bones in my right ankle and dislocated it skateboarding. I was bombing a hill and caught speed wobbles really bad and just ate shit. My bone popped through the skin. I still have the scar to prove it! It was really gross.

What's the best thing about being in San Diego?

San Diego is a chill little corner of the planet. I hate being rushed and shooed around all the time. I love the beaches and how the sun sets over the Pacific. I don't feel suffocated like I do when I'm in other cities.

Find more of Gabbi Mayo at share.myfreecams.com/Gabbi or see more at Penthouse.com

MR. BAD FAITH

RIGHT-WING INTERNET CELEBRITY MIKE CERNOVICH HAS SABOTAGED THE CAREERS OF A HOLLYWOOD DIRECTOR, A VETERAN CONGRESSMAN, AND MORE. IS HE REALLY CALLING IT QUITS, OR IS THIS MORE MEDIA TROLLING?

BY MITCHELL SUNDERLAND

WITH a wineglass in one hand and an iPhone in the other, right-wing internet celebrity Mike Cernovich was soaking in the hot tub at his Orange County, California, home. One of his hired hands—Cernovich calls them "weaponized autistics"—had dug up some of director James Gunn's offensive tweets. In a few months, Cernovich was planning to premiere the documentary *Hoaxed,* his cinematic debut, which predictably covers "fake news," and he worried that mainstream reporters would scour his own tweet record.

To combat potential attacks, Cernovich says he had put out a $10,000 bounty targeting tweets more offensive than his, written by someone more famous than him. He had already bushwhacked several high-profile men—among them, MSNBC pundit Sam Seder, who was fired then rehired after Cernovich misrepresented a cringeworthy Seder tweet from 2009; and longtime Michigan congressman John Conyers, who resigned in November 2017 after Cernovich fed BuzzFeed documents alleging Conyers sexually harassed his employees. Cernovich needed someone huge. Gunn could fit the bill.

But this stuff won't go anywhere, Cernovich recalls thinking as he looked at the first tweets. In his hot tub, he ran Twitter searches for "James Gunn" alongside words like "pedo," "pedophile," and "baby." Bingo. Among a bunch of old, politically incorrect tweets, Gunn had tweeted, "For the record I'm against rape and baby eating in real life (unless you're really, really hungry)." Gunn had also tweeted, "I'm doing a big Hollywood adaptation of The Giving Tree with a happy ending—the tree grows back and gives the kid a blowjob." And there was this, too: "Three men and a baby they have sex with." Gunn had typed the tweets when he worked for the edgy media company Troma Entertainment, but if Cernovich took them out of context, these tweets would sound worse than Cernovich's old tweets denying the existence of date rape. He'd found his winning strategy.

Later that evening, Cernovich shared his plan with his wife Shauna.

"But this guy is a big deal," Shauna replied, according to the couple's recollections. "Please lay the fuck off. This is a high-target scalp. I don't want to deal with this guy!"

"He's just a blue checkmark," Cernovich countered.

"Marvel fans are insane!"

Shauna pointed out that Gunn had spearheaded the *Guardians of the Galaxy* franchise, which had grossed over $1.5 billion—news to Cernovich. He deliberated, then smirked.

"Nope," Cernovich said. "I'm all-in."

Disney owned Marvel, and in May the company's television network, ABC, had fired conservative comedian Roseanne Barr from her eponymous sitcom for tweeting, "Muslim brotherhood & planet of the apes has a baby=VJ." Barr was referencing former Obama advisor Valerie Jarrett, who is African-American. Cernovich reasoned the company would can Gunn, or else face boycotts from Fox News and Rush Limbaugh—serious repercussions for a corporation with a family-friendly brand, and whose theme parks partially rely on Midwestern tourists.

On July 19, Cernovich circulated Gunn's old tweets. The next day, Disney fired the director. A $152-billion company had caved to a right-wing, vest-wearing Orange County dad who built his celebrity, such as it was, via the internet.

The Gunn story was covered by everyone from the *New York Times* to Fox News (where, by the way, Cernovich is unwelcome because of toxic past tweets), but the scandal turned out to suck for the Cernoviches. Mike claims he was doxxed, his home address and other information revealed, by comic book nerds.

When we get together at a coffee joint near their home this past Columbus Day, the couple still appears shaken.

"I'm now more sympathetic to feminists who get rape threats," Cernovich says, balancing his one-year-old daughter on his lap. "There are crazy people on the internet, and it's not fun when they go after you."

As his daughter watches cartoons on an iPhone, Cernovich checks his laptop. Shauna, several months pregnant, dressed in a maternity onesie, sits across from them, eating an egg croissant sandwich.

ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES SILK

JAMES
SILK
2018

"My daughter's a daddy's girl," Shauna remarks.

Cernovich gestures at his child, then says, "I don't bully people on the internet anymore!"

That would depend on your definition of bullying. Although he once tweeted statements like, "I went from libertarian to alt-right after realizing tolerance only went one way and diversity is code for genocide," Cernovich asserts he has avoided getting banned from Twitter, unlike Alex Jones, because he recently has refrained from targeting women or people of color. He says he made an exception for MSNBC anchor Joy Reid because, years ago, she had written homophobic blog posts. (Reid denied writing the posts, at one point making what amounted to a time-traveling-hackers defense.) For Shauna's part, out of concern for her family and life with Cernovich, she prays her husband will one day fuck up online.

"I hope Mike gets banned from every social media platform," Shauna says.

"It's like how in action movies, the hitman is retiring," Cernovich replies, "and then he's given one more mission, and he's sucked in. That's where I am."

After he releases *Hoaxed,* Cernovich promises to quit. This documentary, between its rapid editing and dramatic music, resembles predictable right-wing fare, like Dinesh D'Souza's cinematic propaganda and the flop *Democrats* by African-American Trump supporters Diamond and Silk. While *Hoaxed* features appearances from conservative media regulars, like "Dilbert" creator Scott Adams, it also includes feminists. Toward the end of the film, Cernovich hints that he himself has propagated fake news, before pivoting away from a full-blown confession. It's his swan song to internet fame. Or maybe, Cernovich says, he will produce one more movie. "My job is to help people," he adds.

IN THE AGE OF TRUMP, CERNOVICH HAS EPITOMIZED THE CONCEPT OF "BAD FAITH ACTORS"—MEDIA PERSONALITIES WHO SULLY OTHERS' REPUTATIONS WHILE EXPRESSING FALSE OUTRAGE.

It's impossible to trust anything Cernovich says. In the age of Trump, he has epitomized the concept of "bad faith actors"—media personalities who sully others' reputations while expressing false outrage. During our conversation, Cernovich admits he has lied to reporters about receiving $50,000 a month in alimony from his ex-wife. Then he tells me he received $1.5 million in a divorce settlement. The only thing he stays consistent about is the source of his methods—a fact that he likely promotes to aggravate his opponents.

"[Reporters ask] 'Dude, what's your trick?'" Cernovich says. "I learned it from reporters. I learned it from them!" He points to the liberal nonprofit Media Matters, which exists to find dirt on conservative media organizations, and Andrew Kaczynski, aka "KFile," formerly of BuzzFeed and now with CNN. Kaczynski helped build his career outing Democrat Anthony Weiner's sexting partner, Sydney Leathers, and recirculating controversial statements made by Rand Paul and Mitt Romney.

Since Donald Trump entered the Oval Office, the online liberal activism group Sleeping Giants has taken this to the next level, successfully targeting companies that have paid to advertise on conservative media outlets.

"The left wrote the rules," Cernovich says. "I'm just holding them to their own rules. I would be happy to call a truce, but they never would." Cernovich points to liberals who still have jobs after scandals, like MSNBC's Reid, NBC's Brian Williams, who lied about events he saw as a war reporter, and ESPN's perennial naughty tweeter Keith Olbermann.

"Mike Cernovich's greatest accomplishment is that he's turned everyone on Twitter into Mike Cernovich," says Jon Levine, media critic for The Wrap. "Everything is weaponized, context is dead, apologies are not taken at face value but used as a scalp to encourage more trolling. This behavior is prevalent on all corners of English-language Twitter. Those who rightly criticize his bad faith are often guilty of the same behavior."

Cernovich didn't always care about politics. After attending Pepperdine law school, the 41-year-old Kewanee, Illinois, native wrote a legal blog in the mid-2000s. He wanted to earn a living as a writer, but who reads legal blogs? He rebranded himself as a pickup-artist guru after his 2011 divorce, dispensing advice on a website called Danger & Play. It spawned a self-published book of the same name, and meetups with fans, where Cernovich taught men dating techniques. During 2015's lead-up to the presidential election, Cernovich pivoted to Trumpism because he thought, *The guy's gonna win.*

"Then people started arguing with me," Cernovich says. "I got sucked into it and here I am."

"Do you regret it?" I ask.

"Absolutely. My life was great. If I could go back to a blog that 30,000 people read, I would go back to it. It was a great life. [What's happened since] has raised my profile, but not in a way that's fun for me."

As we speak, Cernovich is tweeting about how Christopher Columbus was a "Stalin-like murderer." Shauna, of Persian descent, says her husband wanted to alienate the racists who had gravitated toward him. Cernovich may just be manipulating the media and segments of the public again to reposition himself. The right-wing online ecosystem where Cernovich blossomed has shifted since Trump took office. Alex Jones has been booted from all social media platforms. Breitbart's traffic has cratered. And although her previous stunts went viral, Laura Loomer, after melting down during Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey's September 2018 appearance before a Congressional committee, failed to break through the Trump-dominated news cycle.

Cernovich's enterprise nearly collapsed in the wake of "Pizzagate." Late in the 2016 presidential campaign, he helped promote a wild conspiracy theory alleging that Hillary Clinton and other liberals operated a child-sex ring beneath the Comet Ping Pong pizzeria in Washington, D.C. After a random Pizzagate believer drove to the nation's capital from North Carolina and shot up the restaurant with an assault rifle in December 2016, Cernovich claimed his boosting of the nutty conspiracy was just "hashtag surfing"—tweeting with the Pizzagate hashtag to self-promote.

Nobody believed this. The machine he'd built was foundering. And then, in November 2017, Cernovich changed the narrative surrounding himself by leaking to BuzzFeed documents alleging John Conyers had sexually harassed employees. After verifying the information, BuzzFeed published an explosive, widely circulated story. Conyers resigned. The media went into a tizzy, wondering how the Pizzagate conspiracy blogger had received information so powerful it helped end the 52-year career of a Democratic congressional lion.

"That's story arc!" Cernovich says. "It became a different story line—'Oh shit people talk to him.' Everyone's in a movie of their own creation. You have to be in the mind-set of, 'What's my story line?' You're a character in a Tom Wolfe novel. What would this

PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE CERNOVICH

character in a Tom Wolfe novel do? He'd be a journalist."

Referencing a 2017 book on the Trump-Steve Bannon partnership, Cernovich continues, "The reason I leaked it to BuzzFeed was because I read *Devil's Bargain,* and Bannon said he would leak to the *New York Times*. I think [BuzzFeed News editor-in-chief] Ben Smith is the only person in media I respect. He understands media–or new media anyway."

Says The Wrap's Jon Levine, "Things like James Gunn or [Cernovich's] involvement with the John Conyers story showed that he could still move the needle on national news in ways most of the others around him can't."

AFTER my breakfast with the Cernovich family, we drive to Disneyland for a visual reminder of the scale pertaining to one of his top takedowns. Shauna, who holds a Disneyland annual pass, jokes, "I'm Orange County, ride or die!"

Around 6 P.M., Cernovich stops outside California Adventure and gazes at the hulking orange and silver tower housing the Guardians of the Galaxy ride.

"Crazy that a dad from Orange County took down the director of a franchise that big," I say.

"It looks like a cool ride!"

Earlier, waiting in line outside the park, Cernovich revealed that he had experienced a revelation. To promote *Hoaxed,* he planned to apologize for Pizzagate. He's thinking of saying something like, "I never really thought it through." He would issue the apology around the time of the film's release.

"Is that a genuine apology?" I ask.

"Nothing is genuine in this world."

MIKE CERNOVICH'S MOST NOTORIOUS HOAXES

By Mitchell Sunderland

LIKE a cheesy pop star, Mike Cernovich has reinvented his media persona multiple times. Whenever the role has grown too controversial, he has distanced himself, hoaxing his audience into believing he was never involved in his previous hoax. Here's a breakdown of his most notorious roles and disavowals.

PICKUP ARTIST OR MEN'S RIGHTS ACTIVIST?

Cernovich first came to prominence teaching dweebs how to get laid on a blog called Danger & Play. Whereas books like *The Game* and other pickup-artist guides recommended negging, Cernovich posted advice that read like Men's Rights activist Reddit threads. "Choking works because it's a show of dominance," he wrote. "Women only want to have consensual sex with men they know could rape them." His current stance? He was writing a satiric *Fifty Shades of Grey* for straight men and only deleted his blog because he knew liberals would take his words out of context.

PROUD BOY OR FELLOW TRAVELER?

Cernovich told me associating with white nationalists is "really retarded," but at his Night for Freedom Party (aka "Mike Cernovich's DeploraBall") in January 2018, Proud Boys and Vice Media founder Gavin McInnes gave a speech, saying, "If going outside tonight and beating the living shit out of radicals means I'm a radical, then I'm a revolutionary."

PIZZAGATE CONSPIRACIST OR "HASHTAG SURFER"?

Near the end of the 2016 election, right-wing Twitter celebrities began promoting a theory that Hillary Clinton operated a child-sex ring beneath the Comet Ping Pong pizzeria in Washington, D.C. "Pizzagate is not going away, this story will be huge!" Cernovich tweeted. A few months later, a conspiracy believer shot up the restaurant. At which point Cernovich denied ever promoting the bizarre fiction, claiming he was just hashtag surfing. "Hashtag surfing," he explains, "is where if there's a big trending hashtag, you just post what you want. Just like when it's International Men's Day, and women tweet with the hashtag, they're not supporting International Men's Day—they're promoting their message."

BUZZFEED SOURCE OR MEDIA HOAXER?

After the Comet Ping Pong shooting, Pizzagate conspiracy theorists were forced underground. But in November 2017, Cernovich fed BuzzFeed legitimate documents alleging longtime Democratic congressman John Conyers had sexually harassed female employees. By providing legit material to a news outlet, Cernovich says he was hoping to manipulate journalists into thinking, *Oh shit, what happens if the Pizzagate guy has actual stories?* He was right that BuzzFeed couldn't resist the bait, and he's flourished ever since.

MORAL CRUSADER OR OPPORTUNIST?

After his BuzzFeed rebound, Cernovich published Disney director James Gunn's old jokes about pedophilia. A few months earlier, Disney had canned conservative comedian Roseanne Barr for an offensive tweet. The corporation caved after Cernovich's maneuver, firing Gunn from the third segment of the billion-dollar *Guardians of the Galaxy* franchise. "I was bringing awareness to the international pedophile crisis," says the man who once gave tips on choking women. Or, as he later says, he was just holding the left to their rules. If the left would stop dragging up conservatives' past, Cernovich claims he would call a truce. Who knows if that's true?

WHAT A DEAD PIMP CAN TEACH AMERICA ABOUT FORGIVENESS

DENNIS HOF LEFT BEHIND A COMPLICATED LEGACY—AND A MAP TO LEAD US OUT OF THE CULTURE WARS.

BY MITCHELL SUNDERLAND

AFTER the larger-than-life owner of the Moonlite Bunny Ranch died, his working girls asked, "What would Dennis want us to do?" Alice Little, America's highest-earning legal prostitute, concluded he would want her to charge a john to be her funeral date. When I wondered what Dennis would want me to do, I concluded he would want me to write. Dennis loved free press as much as pussy.

I first met him in 2015. To promote his memoir, *The Art of the Pimp,* Dennis invited me to live at the Bunny Ranch for a week. When I arrived, the night madam led me to a room that had three fireplaces, vertical blinds, and a view of a wooden porch shaped like Ron Jeremy's penis. I woke up to the sound of a hooker blasting Lana Del Rey's "Born to Die." Dennis's first words to me that morning: "Heigh ho, heigh ho, it's off to work we go!" His fantasyland seemed like a parody of a parody of a brothel.

I was skeptical of Dennis—press releases like "PROSTITUTES FOR RON PAUL" prepared me for a man who spoke in soundbites—but over Heidi Fleiss Veggie Burgers at the Bunny Ranch restaurant, Dennis confessed his public image was a facade. For instance, he always held a cigar in photos, but actually never smoked. Larry Flynt had told him, "Never let them take your picture without a cigar." When Dennis lied, he winked. He told the truth even when he fibbed. He was not a Hugh Hefner, who claimed *Playboy*'s nude pictorials were art, superior to pornography. Dennis learned radical honesty reading Flynt's *Hustler,* Al Goldstein's *Screw,* and Bob Guccione's *Penthouse,* the canon of smut.

As a working-class boy in Arizona, Dennis loved dirty magazines and worshipped big-breasted blondes with nasty attitudes. The legend goes Marilyn Monroe kissed an eight-year-old Dennis on the cheek at the Arizona State Fair, inciting his first erection. In his memoir, Dennis wrote, "Marilyn Monroe has just sealed my fate. To this day, I can't resist a glammed-up blonde, especially if she's got red lips." Marilyn was a kind creature, whereas Dennis's mother scared him. She dominated his weak father; masturbation was Dennis's respite. When he grew up, Dennis swore he would control his own fate. He was thinking he'd own gas stations.

The public got their first big dose of Dennis in 2005 when he brought his flagship brothel into American homes via the HBO reality show *Cathouse*. Dennis bought the Bunny Ranch in 1992, at age 46. This purchase marked the start of his fourth career.

Throughout his teen years, Dennis worked at a gas station. After he knocked up Shirley, his high school sweetheart and first wife, he began managing the pump, saving every paycheck. He leased a decaying gas station in the late sixties, and by 1971, he was the owner of five filling stations. During the seventies and eighties, Dennis invested in three more businesses: a towing company, a parking garage, and a time-share sales operation.

He was miserable. According to *The Art of the Pimp,* Dennis craved more sex. He paged through porn rags like a law student studying for the bar exam, claiming his wife could not keep up with his sex drive. Driving to and from his businesses, he passed the Moonlite Ranch. Listening to his gut one day, Dennis swerved into the parking lot.

Inside the run-down, century-old brothel, Dennis experienced a courtesan for the first time. Lounging in her bedroom, post orgasm, he realized he was inside one of the fantasies he had read about in *Hustler, Screw,* and *Penthouse*. He also realized he was a dog. And in a brothel, he could embrace his canine instincts. "It's good to be called a dog," he told me. "It means you're man's best friend."

America's least judgmental man was born.

Over the next decade, Dennis kept returning to the Moonlite Ranch. He met sex legends, like Andy Kaufman and Bob Zmuda, and listened to them discuss press stunts and their wildest sexual sojourns. In his memoir, Dennis describes topping them all when he showed up at the Moonlite Ranch with his own dad. Most would gag at the thought of bringing their old man to a whorehouse, but Dennis knew his dad had spent years dreaming of a roll in the hay with someone other than his grouchy wife. He wanted to fulfill his pop's fantasy. That was Dennis. He accepted—and celebrated—each individual at their basest core.

Many baby boomers digested *Hustler, Screw,* and *Penthouse,* and occasionally fucked hookers. They all dreamed of living the lives of porn titans, but Dennis is perhaps the only man who, in middle age, decided to join the sex trade and surround himself with dozens of sexy, curvy women.

When he bought the Moonlite Ranch, and rebranded the bordello Dennis Hof's World-Famous Moonlite Bunny Ranch,

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY LOMBARD

Hof in his office at the Bunny Ranch.

he claimed to have spent half a million dollars renovating the place, installing red velvet couches and new bedrooms. Dennis wanted to reach the "sex legend" heights of his idols. He wanted to be the Walt Disney of brothel owners.

As the Bunny Ranch's new owner, he changed the rules. Whereas before hookers lived in "lockdown," banned from leaving the brothel, he let them roam free. The women set their own prices and could now fuck women. At weekly tea time, Dennis lectured the girls on what men wanted and taught a new sales system. A visitor rang a bell, sounding an alarm through the brothel. In their red pumps, hookers clicked down the halls, forming a lineup. They introduced themselves. The man picked his girl. While she led him on a tour of the brothel, the other girls ran to designated spots. If the man lost interest in his first pick, a woman was standing there ready to intercept.

Whereas other pimps hid their techniques and avoided media, Dennis bragged about the mechanics of his operation to the press. He staged elaborate press stunts, like hiring John Wayne Bobbitt as a greeter after his wife Lorena chopped off his cock. On *Cathouse,* Dennis normalized lineups and sex workers. Feminists compared his methods to a chicken farmer, but as Madam Lydia, one of his employees, pointed out, the lineups decreased women's emotional labor, as they didn't have to constantly engage in elaborate, interpersonal seduction-of-customer contests with each other. Dennis's innovations led to higher sales, and by the end of his life, he had bought the majority of Nevada's brothels.

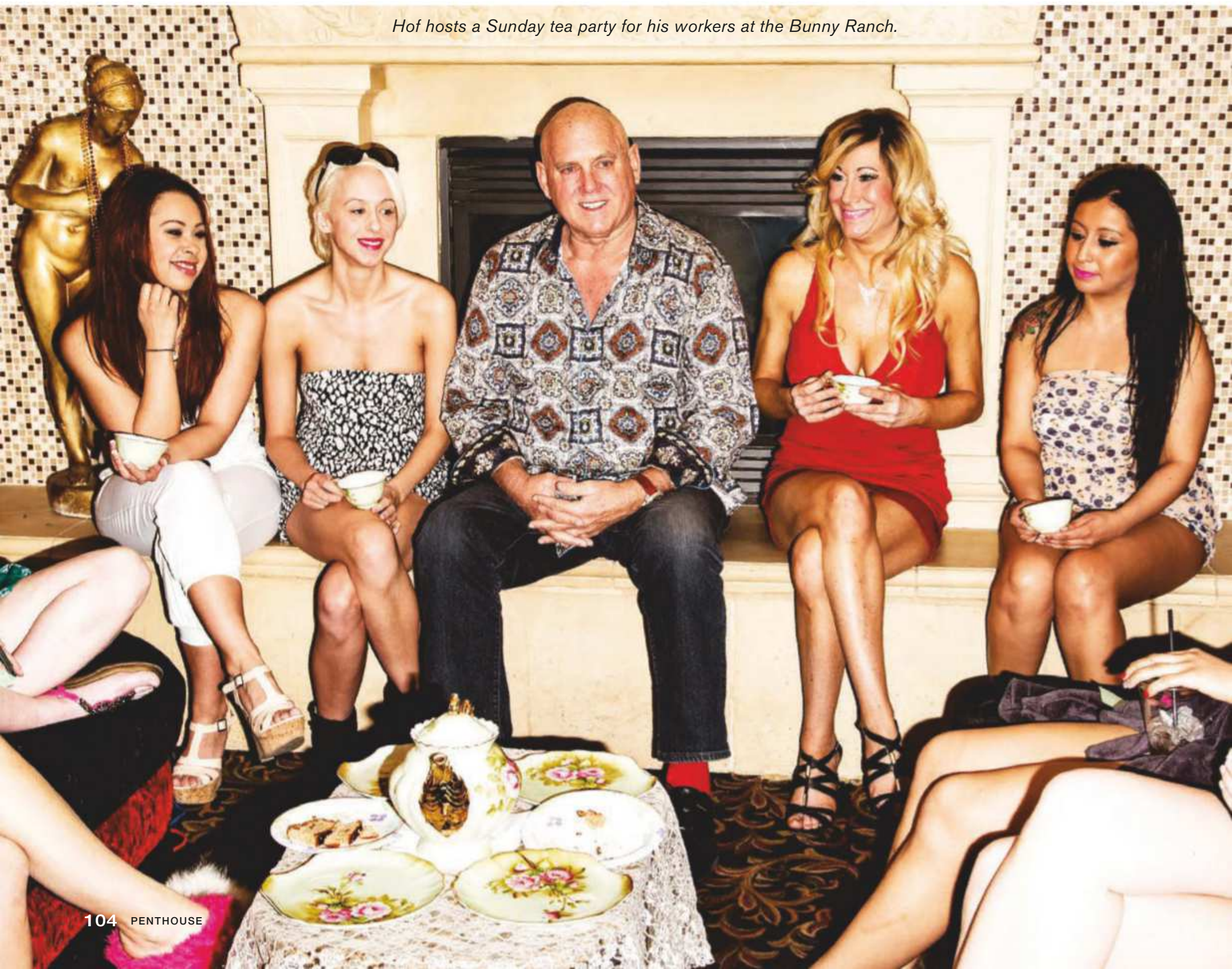
Dennis was a shrewd businessman, but he was imperfect. He took half a girl's earnings—too much—and was accused of getting violent with some employees. (He denied all accusations.)

Many girls loved him. After his death, hookers tweeted about how he visited them in prison and rehab. When a competing brothel fired a pregnant hooker, Dennis hired her. In the parlor, he rubbed her belly, jokingly calling the fetus "Dennis Jr."

Perhaps Dennis's controlling tendencies stemmed from his love of hookers. "Women. Jesus. What a gift!" he wrote in his memoir. I watched one blonde lie to him about leaving town to visit her grandmother, then never return. Dennis fell into a funk. "I teach the tricks how to trick, then I get tricked by my own tricks' tricks," he said. Dennis hated to see hookers go.

DENNIS WANTED TO REACH THE "SEX LEGEND" HEIGHTS OF HIS IDOLS. HE WANTED TO BE THE WALT DISNEY OF BROTHEL OWNERS.

Hof hosts a Sunday tea party for his workers at the Bunny Ranch.



MOST BROTHEL OWNERS CATER TO BUSINESS TYCOONS. DENNIS BELIEVED EVERYONE DESERVED TO LIVE THEIR FANTASIES. HE REALIZED THERE WAS A LOT TO BE MADE OFF OF HORNY AVERAGE JOES.

He rarely left his brothels, and I believe it was because he was scared of the heartbreak out there in the big, wild world. Walt Disney was only safe at Disneyland; Dennis was only secure at his brothels.

When she got out of prison, Heidi Fleiss, the notorious "Hollywood Madam," was shocked at Dennis's taste in women. Where she traded in sophisticated, well-educated escorts–girls who could blow you, then discuss the latest issue of *The Economist*–Dennis sold girls straight out of *Hustler*. How could he make money? Fleiss visited and watched as one trucker after another paid for a trick. New-money men came in hordes. Most brothel owners cater to business tycoons. Dennis believed everyone deserved to live their fantasies. He realized there was also a lot to be made off of horny average Joes.

Men paid to live inside Dennis's world, but Dennis liked to please everyone. The weekend the *Washington Post* published then-candidate Trump's "Grab 'em by the pussy" tape, I attended Dennis's birthday party. I looked up at the brothel's neon sign and saw my name beside those of Flavor Flav, Joey Buttafuoco, and Ron Jeremy. Dennis wanted everyone to feel like a king. And he had a gift for boosting your morale when you needed it.

I experienced this firsthand last fall when I was doxxed after BuzzFeed leaked an email where I called a woman fat. Vice fired me. I lost childhood friends and family members over the bad joke. Dennis called and told me to stay in the Bunny Ranch for a bit. He asked no questions. He was just concerned about my safety. To make me feel better on my arrival, Dennis instructed 50 hookers to scream, "FUCK VICE!"

I later learned that a media executive visited the Bunny Ranch after she was fired, knowing she'd be feeling better by the time she left, thanks to Dennis. Heidi Fleiss came to call Dennis her "most loyal friend."

A lot of people claim they "don't give a fuck" about what others say, but Dennis truly did not give a shit. And he would never allow the negative opinions of others to influence the way he thought about someone. He'd make up his own mind.

With Dennis's death, Flynt, Fleiss, and Ron Jeremy are America's remaining sex celebrities. A distinct sensibility–tongue-in-cheek humor, shamelessness, complete embrace of sex, media pizzazz–is endangered. Many view this attitude as an outdated, heterosexual one, but in Dennis, what the sensibility really embodied at its core was an acceptance of everyone for who they were–even those society deemed pariahs.

I know some of his friends were shocked that Dennis invited Joe Arpaio, former sheriff of Arizona's Maricopa County, an immigration firebrand who ran a tent prison, to his final birthday party and political rally in mid-October. At first I was offended, too, but I can't say I was surprised. Arpaio was probably nice to Dennis, and America's pimp took him for who he was in the moment.

As America's culture war rages on, we could all take a hint from Dennis Hof. In the age of Trump, many talk about the importance of empathy and mindfulness, but we just lost the most thoughtful man in America.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY LOMBARD

WORKING GIRLS REMEMBER THEIR PIMP

By Mitchell Sunderland

SINCE Dennis Hof died, feminists, Christians, and sex-trafficking hysterics have disparaged his name. But few have heard from the women who tricked in his bordellos. In advance of Dennis's memorial, *Penthouse* asked some of his favorite working girls to pen tributes to the man they called "Daddy D." May he rest in love.

It saddens me that even in death, Dennis continues to be maligned as a villain or memorialized as a caricature. He was neither. Much has been made of his sexual relationships with the women who referred to him as "Daddy"—his detractors view it as evidence that Dennis saw women as objects—but as his platonic, lefty feminist protégé, I feel morally obligated to dispute this perception. The man I knew wanted to close the gender pay gap, supported LGBTQ rights, and identified as a free-thinking atheist. Even when we disagreed, we never exchanged unkind words. He was genuinely the most pleasant man I've known.
—Lydia Faithfull, former madam at the Alien Cathouse

I met Dennis in 2014 when I began researching his brothels as part of my doctoral work. He was the only brothel owner who opened his doors to me and encouraged my research. I will always be grateful for the opportunities that followed, but I am most grateful for the bond we developed. Dennis served multiple roles in my life: boss, mentor, friend, motivational speaker, and role model. His faith in me helped me have faith in myself. Dennis changed my life for the better, and I will miss him every single day.
—Christina Parreira, UNLV Sociology PhD candidate and former working girl at Love Ranch Vegas and Alien Cathouse

Dennis was so much more than just a boss—he was a friend, a mentor, and a role model. He revolutionized the legal sex-work industry, taking us out of the shadows and into the limelight. His legacy of empowering women to be successful on their own terms will continue, though we will miss him terribly.
—Alice Little, highest-earning working girl at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch

Dennis was a great businessman who completely transformed the legal brothels in Nevada. I had known him for seven years, and during that time, he taught me the value of hard work and confidence. All Dennis wanted from his brothel employees was for them to succeed and to be their best, most confident selves. He was truly the legal brothel industry's champion. His legacy will be remembered as one of bravery and extreme success.
—Ruby Rae, working girl at the Moonlite Bunny Ranch

Google

GOOGLE PLAYED POLITICS AND LOST

THE TECH GIANT'S ATTEMPT TO APPEAR POLITICALLY CORRECT IS DESTROYING ITS COMPANY CULTURE FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

BY CLAIRE LEHMANN

EARLIER this year, James Damore, author of the infamous "Google memo," and his lawyer, Harmeet Dhillon, a former vice chairman of the California Republican Party, brought a class-action lawsuit against the internet giant, accusing the company of discriminating against white men in particular and conservatives in general.

Within the same month, lawyers representing women who worked at Google refiled a class-action lawsuit that claimed female employees were, and still are, routinely paid less, assigned to lower positions, and promoted less often than the men in the company.

The company is thus facing legal action from both ends of the political spectrum: progressive feminists and conservative white males. It's hard to say what the outcome of these two lawsuits will be at this stage. Google will surely put up a formidable defense on both fronts, while leaders of other large organizations—both inside Silicon Valley and outside—will be watching intently. While the internet behemoth has pockets deep enough to absorb such legal costs, the public relations fallout will be damaging. Each time a new allegation hits the headlines, the company looks more like a dysfunctional soap opera than a dynamic tech innovator.

As of February 2018, Damore's 161-page complaint against Google contained an 87-page exhibit featuring countless screenshots from internal message boards, which employees used to communicate with each other. This communication allegedly is evidence of widespread prejudice toward white males and conservatives within the organization.

Of course, these screenshots present a cherry-picked view; the snippets don't give the bigger picture of staff communication, which for the most part is likely mundane and reasonable. Nevertheless, the snippets that *are* shown present a salacious picture of unprofessional behavior and a culture of normalized intolerance.

Regarding white men, one Google employee wrote on the boards that she could "care less about being 'unfair' to cisgender, straight, able-bodied wealthy white men" who "already have all the advantages in the world." Another shared the opinion that, "If you put a group of 40-something white men in a room together and tell them to come up with something creative or innovative, they'll come back and tell you how enjoyable the process was, and how they want to do it again, but they come up with fuck-all as a result!" Terms frequently used in communications included "mansplaining," "whitesplaining," "white fragility," "white tears," and "toxic whiteness."

A GOOGLE EMPLOYEE MESSAGE POST READ: "BY BEING A WHITE MALE, YOU *ARE* IN A PRIVILEGED CLASS, WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT. SO, NO, YOU REALLY ACTUALLY DON'T GET TO COMPLAIN ABOUT YOUR RIGHT TO AN OPINION."

It used to be that corporations would go to great lengths to avoid being seen as politicized to the public, the reasoning being obvious: If you take a political stance, you are likely to alienate potential customers. But things have changed—particularly in the United States. Companies now engage in flamboyant virtue-signaling to attract certain markets and offset their image as greedy corporations. Google has long been accused of tax avoidance, privacy breaches, and other kinds of unethical behavior. To compensate for this, it appears that they have turned up the dial on their commitment to "social justice."

When the company was founded by Sergey Brin and

Larry Page, Google's mission statement was "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful." Their unofficial motto was "Don't be evil," which later became an official motto of "Do the right thing." In recent years, the company has increasingly aligned itself with social justice and progressive values in the public sphere.

How much of this is sincere, and how much is fabricated, is up for debate. But what is clear is that for some staff within the organization, these commitments to social justice have not yet gone far enough.

In the original version of the lawsuit filed against Google claiming discrimination against women, three former employees–Kelly Ellis, Holly Pease, and Kelli Wisuri–accused the company of systematically paying women less than men. It has been reported that, in coming to their view, they compiled a spreadsheet of confidential information–other employees' salaries–comparing rates of their colleagues by gender. This spreadsheet ended up being leaked to the press, and was parodied by the satirical site The Onion, in a piece entitled "Google Now Giving Female Employees a Free Day Each Week to Work on Lawsuits."

Ellis, one of the complainants, has alleged that she left the company because of its "sexist culture," and has tweeted about being sexually harassed by male staff. Her accounts of being harassed include an engineering director telling her that it was "taking all of my self-control not to grab your ass right now," another staff member telling her that "You look amazing in that bathing suit, like a rock star," and overhearing a male staff member say to another, "Doesn't Kelly look amazing heh, heh."

In December 2017, the women's lawsuit was thrown out by a female judge for being too vague. The judge intimated that while the discrepancies in pay were there, the complaint did not adequately prove that the male and female employees were doing the same work, and so discrimination could not be proven. The women promised to "reboot" their accusations and return to court with the required evidence; the following month, the lawsuit was revived, with another woman complainant added. Meanwhile, newspapers around the world were running headlines screaming: "Google Sued for Gender Discrimination."

The unfolding Google drama should be seen as a cautionary tale about what can happen when a company lets identity politics through its doors. Identity politics–the tendency of people to form political alliances according to their membership in a group based on race, gender, sexuality, or disability–as opposed to shared principles, is corrosive to a large corporate organization because it exaggerates what psychologists call our in-group and out-group biases and sabotages team spirit in the process.

Psychologists explain it like this: Human beings evolved to operate in tribes and learned to be somewhat wary of those who come from different tribes along the way. In experiments conducted in the 1970s, psychologists found that positive feelings toward one's in-group and negative feelings toward an out-group were easily activated and readily maintained.

The human predilection toward tribalism appears universal and instinctive, as shown in one such experiment conducted by famed social psychologist Henri Tajfel. In the experiment, schoolboys were assigned to two different groups according to whether they preferred the abstract paintings of Kandinsky, or the abstract paintings of Klee. When they were pitted against each other in a series of games, they consistently favored members of their own group, and consistently competed against members of the out-group, despite the fact the distinction between them was completely arbitrary. Further experiments have found that this in-group/out-group bias can be activated by something as simple as a coin toss.

What this means for the workplace is that policies and initiatives that are designed to improve "diversity" can end up backfiring on a company and activate this very bias.

Programs that are well-intentioned can actually cause more harm than good if they are implemented without sensitivity to whether or not they will pit employees against one another in little mini-tribes. Such programs can include "implicit bias training,"

THE UNFOLDING GOOGLE DRAMA SHOULD BE SEEN AS A CAUTIONARY TALE ABOUT WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN A COMPANY LETS IDENTITY POLITICS THROUGH ITS DOORS.

which is now being blamed for causing "backfire effects" within workplaces. And this training, which is based on a test which is in its own right controversial (many psychologists argue that it does not measure actual bias), was implemented by Google across its entire workforce in 2013.

Around five years ago, Google rolled out its unconscious bias training–inspired by the disputed Implicit Association Test (IAT)–to its entire workforce of then just under 50,000 people. It consisted of a presentation that lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The presentation began with slides explaining that implicit bias was natural in all of us, and we were born with it because the human brain evolved to be efficient and take shortcuts. The presentation gently explained that, unfortunately, some of these shortcuts were bad and had unwanted effects in the workplace. "Even a tiny bit of bias can have big consequences," the slides stated, and "Companies with higher proportions of women board directors outperform others by 53 percent."

Since Google rolled out this training, its effectiveness has been disputed. For example, a large systemic review published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* in 2016 found that implicit bias training had no lasting effect at all. A separate, yet-to-be-published meta-analysis from 2017 also found that while "implicit bias is malleable," any change in implicit bias "does not necessarily lead to changes in explicit bias or behavior."

Google headquarters in Mountain View, California

James Damore

What this training does do, however, is bring skin color and gender identity to the fore. It increases people's awareness of their identities as "male" or "female," "white" or "black," thereby creating an in-group of "female Googlers" and "minority Googlers" and an out-group of "white male Googlers." It's no wonder that, five years later, the company finds itself being sued by representatives of both identity groups who claim to be aggrieved that the company is making them feel uncomfortable and angered because things have not gone their way.

Due to the aggressive diversity efforts aimed at promoting women and minorities within the company, Google's leaders appear to have activated a sense of grievance and factionalism among their employee community. Rather than working together as a cohesive and trusting team, employees have compiled spreadsheets about each other, have taken screenshots of each other's communications, and have tweeted out their frustrations for all the world to see.

Why is this happening? We can blame identity politics. While many groups can claim ownership of historical injustices and voice legitimate concerns, identity politics can also be taken too far. And when it is taken too far, what emerges is a rejection of teamwork based on shared values and vision, and instead a zero-sum competition for power and resources takes its place.

And, within the workplace, this is poison.

Claire Lehmann is an Australian writer and the founding editor of Quillette.

ON EDGE

BY JENNY NORDBAK

THERE'S something deeply satisfying about running a blade along a man's throat. I learned to use a straight razor when one of my regular play partners requested it. I had never been interested in shaving as erotic play before that, but it immediately triggered a fetish for me, and I began to practice and explore the act more.

Women are almost always hyperaware of our physical weakness compared to most men. No matter how badass we are, men are usually bigger, stronger, and faster than us, so there's a low-level feeling of vulnerability pretty much all the time. The first time I had a man tied up and at my mercy, the thrill of power was intoxicating. It didn't matter that he was bigger than me, I could do whatever I wanted and he would be powerless to do anything about it. The deeper rush was knowing that he trusted me *not* to cross any boundaries. Trust is fucking sexy.

Winston lying back and letting me shave him with a straight razor reminded me a little bit of watching a man put his head in a lion's mouth. It was like bondage, but added a kick of adrenaline on both sides. The risk with bondage is fairly passive, but the intensity of a straight razor is continuous. With every stroke across his skin, he had to trust me, and I had to be careful and aware.

The very first time he let me do it, I was shaking I was so nervous, and I nicked his jawline. Watching that tiny trickle of red run across his wet skin did nothing to soothe my nerves, but it did excite something visceral inside me.

Months into our experimentation with erotic shaving, I announced to Winston that this time we were going to play with a blindfold. He didn't argue when I slid the strip of fabric over his eyes, taking away his sight. He lay back on the leather massage table naked and ready for me. I climbed onto the table on top of him, watching his smile spread when he felt my bare pussy on his chest. His hands rose to cup my ass, but I slapped them away. This was my show and he didn't get to touch uninvited.

I wasn't going to bother with the intense perfection required for a really good shave. Instead, I was just going to simulate the sensations without worrying too much about actually removing hair.

Working my way around his cheeks and jaw, I lost myself in the luxurious intimacy of sitting astride this sexy man, touching his face, and literally dragging a blade over his sensitive skin without him so much as flinching. Did I mention how sexy trust is?

As I moved down to his throat, I played with the sensations more, using the flat side to scrape harder, and then teasing the stinging skin with feather-light touches. I licked along the side of his neck with my tongue, letting my nipples just barely brush against him, before switching back to a stroke of the razor again. I knew he would be getting muddled, not sure what was coming next.

I scooted down his body, deliberately letting him feel how wet I was getting. I pressed the length of my body against his, kissing him deeply, letting every inch of our naked bodies that I could manage slide together with delicious friction.

I scooted lower, still teasing my way down his chest and abs with the razor, letting him feel the sharpness over his heart and in the deep "V" of muscle that led to his groin.

Lifting my hips, I sunk slowly down onto his hard cock, letting my pussy slide along the length of it. I wanted so badly just to ride him, but knew I could wring even more pleasure out of this for both of us. I ground against him, pressing his hardness against my clit as I rubbed back and forth, letting the slick wetness from my pussy cover his dick.

I LOST MYSELF IN THE LUXURIOUS INTIMACY OF SITTING ASTRIDE THIS SEXY MAN, TOUCHING HIS FACE, AND LITERALLY DRAGGING A BLADE OVER HIS SENSITIVE SKIN WITHOUT HIM SO MUCH AS FLINCHING.

I had never used the razor near his cock before and I felt him flinch for the first time when I stroked it lightly from the base to the head of his manhood. I could have narrated for him exactly how much power he was giving me, that with the flick of my wrist I could make him a eunuch, but I didn't need to. I felt a shudder run through him as he fisted his hands, probably wanting to push me away, but forcing himself to take it.

I rewarded him by sucking his cock into my mouth, sliding it in and out, deeper and deeper into my throat each time. He groaned and bucked his hips, and when it seemed like he was getting close to coming, I pulled back, straddling him again, and parting the folds of my pussy with the head of his cock.

I didn't always let him fuck me. This was a special treat, but I wasn't going to make it easy for him. He was violating my sacred place, thrusting deep inside me, but I still had the power.

I closed one hand around his throat, not trusting myself to use the blade, and I rode him hard, letting our hips slap together hard enough to hurt. I let him grab my ass, loving the feel of his fingers pressing into my soft flesh hard enough to bruise. He knew how much I loved that heady mix of pleasure and pain.

I came before he did, still clutching the blade in one hand and his throat in the other.

"Would you have cut my dick off if I came first?" he asked, laughing a little.

That must have been what he was fantasizing about as he got close. What a delightful threat that I could tuck away for next time.

"Maybe," I teased, pulling the blindfold off and kissing him. "Are you sure you want to find out?"

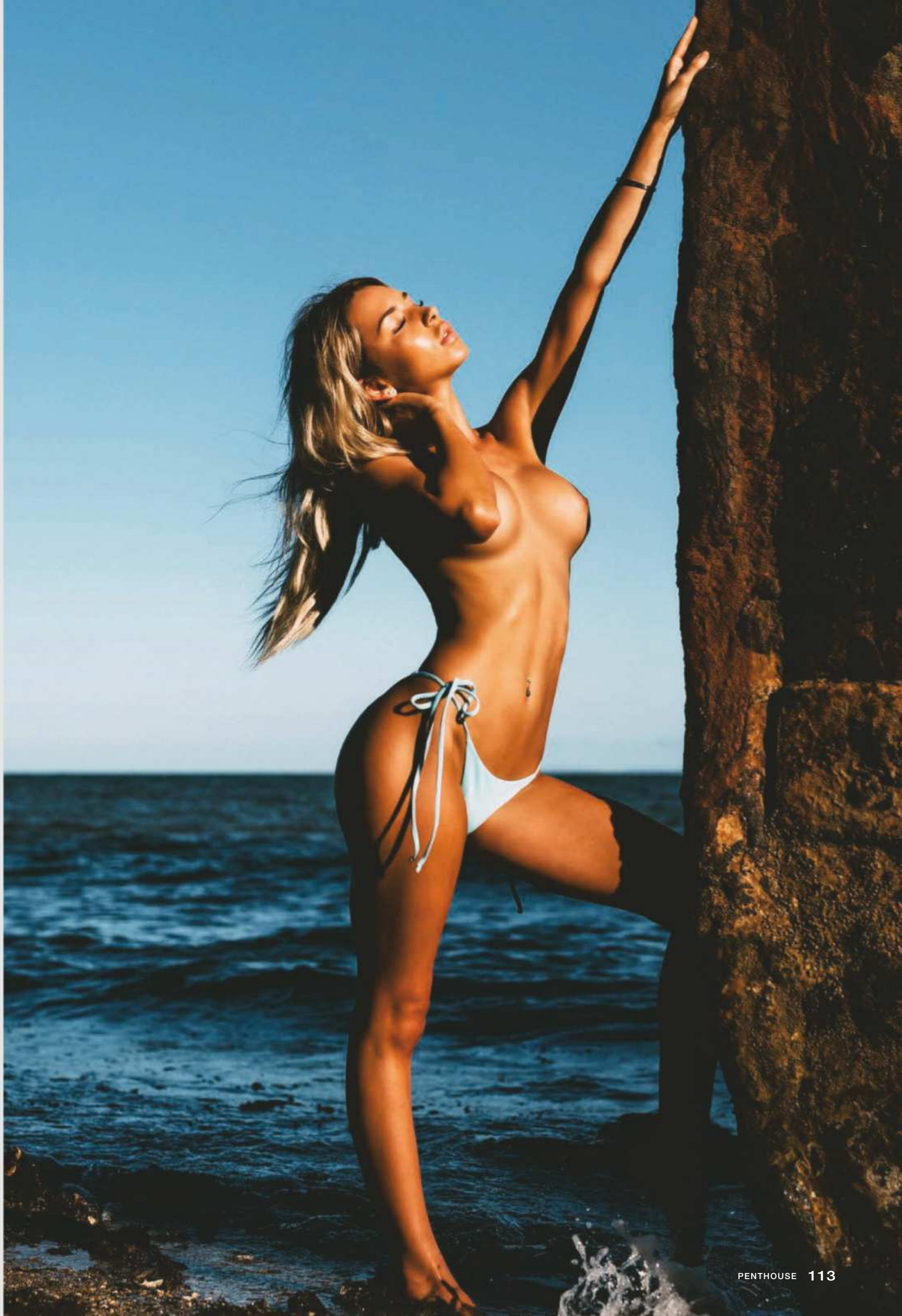
Jenny Nordbak is a retired dominatrix and author of "The Scarlett Letters: My Secret Year of Men in an L.A. Dungeon."

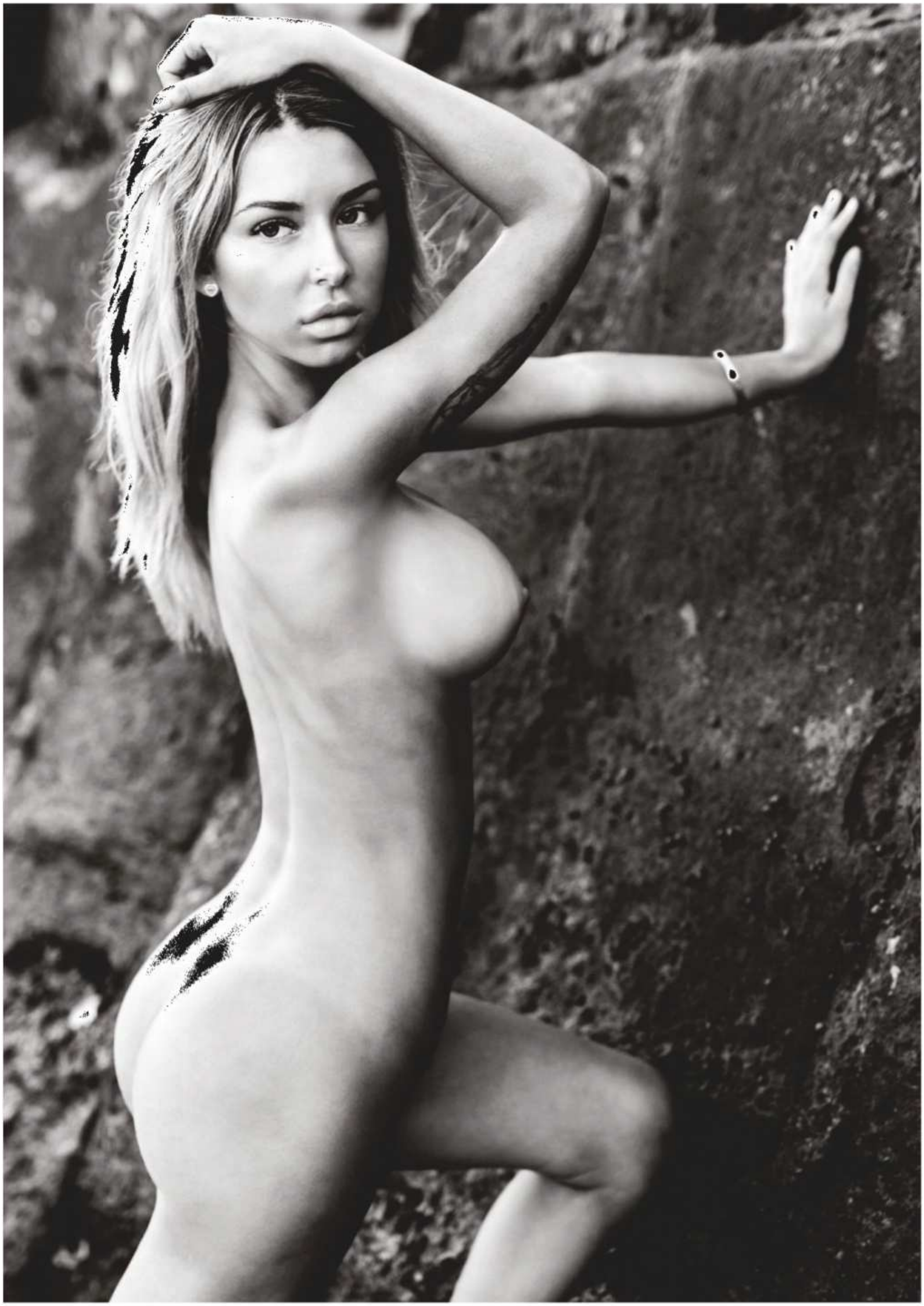
SHIPWRECKED

Photography: Jackson Heeley

The *HMQS Gayundah* was a flat-iron gunboat operated by the Royal Australian Navy in the early 1900s. Now the crumbling ship sits on a beach in Australia waiting for nothing. If you didn't know any better, you'd think our model, Shan Hawkins, was posing under some kind of crazy rock formation. Nope. That's the rusted hull of the *HMQS Gayundah*.

Follow Shan @Shan Hawkins





U.S. AIR FORCE
U.S. NAVY
U.S. ARMY
U.S. MARINES

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / MAP BY MILITARIST

ONE FOR THE TEAM

IS MANDATORY NATIONAL SERVICE THE SOLUTION TO PRESERVING DEMOCRACY?

BY MATT GALLAGHER

I WAS shooting the shit with another Army vet the other night at our local watering hole, and between watching the football game and making fun of frat-star Brett "Boofin'" Kavanaugh, he revealed his plan to help heal the cultural divides of twenty-first-century America: mandatory national service.

He asked me what I thought and, being the enterprising scribe I am (and not at all because I'm a bad conversationalist who was worried about a fantasy football upset playing out on the screen), I deferred and asked what *he* thought about it.

"Shit, dude–it might be the only thing that could work. Remind people that we're all in this experiment of democracy together, you know? Think of your soldiers. Came from all over. Black dudes from the South, white dudes from Boston, all in the Suck. A bit of that for everyone could go a long way."

I've gotten the sense this is something discussed a lot in veteran, national security, and social service circles, and not at all anywhere else. Which makes sense. What my friend says about working together under hardship is bona fide and true. It's easy to label and stereotype and believe in bad-faith logic when "the other side" has no name or face or humanity. Things change when they do.

There are a few different proposals for national service out there, but they all revolve around a similar principle: that for a short period of time after high school and before whatever comes next, American youth must serve. Maybe that means a stint in the military. Maybe that means a stint the Peace Corps. Maybe that means the Park Service, or AmeriCorps, or Habitat for Humanity, or serving as a teaching assistant. It's an institutionalized extension of President John F. Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country" edict, and it's not without precedent: among other countries, modern Israel, Germany, and Finland have utilized versions of the concept.

Perhaps America's biggest current advocate for mandatory national service is retired General Stanley McChrystal. (You may remember McChrystal's name from his lethal time as the commander of Joint Special Operations Command and/or that scandalous 2010 *Rolling Stone* profile that ended with McChrystal's resignation and subsequent retirement.) He's written op-eds and given speeches on the matter, focusing on the ideas of civic responsibility and engaged citizenship. As he outlines in an article for *TIME,* "We are a nation of innovators and problem-solvers who sparked revolutions in democratic government, civil rights, communications, flight, rural

Men display their draft cards, New York City, 1917.

IS THERE A SUITABLE COMPROMISE BETWEEN MANDATORY NATIONAL SERVICE AND LETTING SHITBAGS BE SHITBAGS? I BELIEVE SO, AND IT'S SOMETHING THAT LEARNED MEN AND WOMEN WHO UNDERSTAND THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT HAVE PURSUED BEFORE.

electrification, and technology. We are a country defined by ideals now in need of rescue."

One year of mandatory service, McChrystal believes, will help build back public "trust and consensus—the hard and disappearing work of democracy."

It's a compelling proposal, and putting aside its practical chances of actually happening in twenty-first-century America (for the moment, at least), it's an intriguing exercise for anyone in our country to ask themselves, "What would I have done at eighteen in a country like that? How would it have changed me? What would I be like now?" And so on.

I've supported and championed mandatory national service in the past. And yet….

There's a big question of its constitutionality. As a native Nevadan (the land of silver, Area 51, and practically every federal government conspiracy imaginable), I know well there's a libertarian streak in the American psyche that seeks to defy anything and everything about the word "mandatory." I don't agree with it, usually, but it's there, as American as baseball and firearms. In a free society, liberty is for all, for the very best and the very worst. Alas, liberty means letting shitbags be shitbags, if they're so inclined.

Then there's the issue of fitness. According to a recent Heritage Foundation report, nearly one-third of young Americans are too overweight for military service. That won't matter for all the possible national service options, but it'll matter to some, like the Park Service. Then consider mental fitness. That America's in the midst of a mental health epidemic is not news—approximately one in five American adults have a mental health condition, and youth mental health worsens every year. Maybe national service helps with that, sure. Maybe it also pushes responsibility and duty onto people who just aren't capable of handling those things, even if they want to. Service helped shape me and my worldview, and I remain fiercely proud of it, my successes and my failures, and everything in between, too. Is it (or some form of it) for everyone, though?

I wish it was. I really fucking do. But hope is not a method.

Or, as the late, great Hunter S. Thompson (whose own politics are tough to pin down, because he was both brilliant and nuts) put it, "Freedom is something that dies unless it's used."

Is there a suitable compromise between mandatory national service and letting shitbags be shitbags? I believe so, and it's something that learned men and women who understand the strengths and weaknesses of American government have pursued before. (So, yeah. Not happening under our man Trump.)

As recently as 2015, John McCain was trying to restart a variant of FDR's old Civilian Conservation Corps, a public relief work program that put American youth and returning veterans to work on public lands projects. College money, debt relief, stable income—these things matter and are attractive to talented young people. A serious republic would commit itself to connecting that fresh talent to public needs. It doesn't need to be a full-blown New Deal to be a net positive for individuals and the public alike. It doesn't have to be mandatory to provide opportunity. And what's more American than opportunity?

We've been a serious republic in the past. Here's hoping we can be again, someday.

Matt Gallagher is a U.S. Army veteran of Iraq and the author of the novel "Youngblood" (Atria/Simon & Schuster).

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SUBTEXT IS EVERYTHING

ONE GUY'S ARGUMENTS AGAINST WHAT WE WERE TAUGHT TO BELIEVE.

BY JOE DEROSA

"Why don't they/ Do what they say, say what you mean."—*The Fixx, from "One Thing Leads to Another" (the only tune of theirs I've ever heard, but it's a damn goodie!)*

BEFORE we get into this month's topic, I have a bit of bad news, good and decent *Penthouse* readers: I am bidding thee farewell….

Well, I'll still be writing stuff for this glorious porno mag—I'm just done with this column. After all, how much can one guy rant about hating practices, persuasions, and people? By my calculations: about 13 months.

Over the last year or so, I've used these pages to air my gripes about marriage, voting, sensitivity, merit, and a bunch of other subjects that I hope had readers thinking, *Interesting point*, and not, *What an asshole*. To be fair, it was probably a little of both.

But since my fear of being repetitive far outweighs my respect for commitment, I'm bringing this thing to an end. Anyway, enough with the salutations. I was never very adept at expressing sentiment. Let's get back to my speciality: bitching and moaning.

As stated, this column has always focused on broader cultural ideas and concepts. But since this is the final entry to "You Let Me Down," I wanted to try something different. For this piece, I'm shifting my focus from the surface to the subtext.

Subtext. I don't think the term has ever been more relevant than here and now. When it comes to our favorite modern-day way to talk to one another—text messages, email, and social media (you know, the types of discussion where you don't have to hear another person's pesky voice)—subtext is swinging harder than ever. But I don't think many of us are recognizing it.

The proper definition of the word is "an underlying and often distinct theme in a piece of writing or conversation." Current methods of conversation are, almost exclusively, executed through writing, and there is a theme: We're completely full of shit! We don't mean what we say and we don't say what we mean.

So, I took it upon myself to take some of this digital-age jargon and translate it into what I think its users are actually saying. I've come up with a list of phrases, words, and hashtags that we casually throw around on a daily, sometimes hourly, basis. Underneath each is their subtext and, of course, the two are quite different. But as they say, "The devil is in the details." And if you ask me, what you're about to read is a list of truly iniquitous language.

INTERNET LANGUAGE TRANSLATOR:

- **"You're my new fave."**
Translation: You haven't offended me yet, but it's only a matter of time.

- **"I love you soooooooo much."**
Translation: I like you but also think you're too dumb to recognize empty flattery.

- **"Definitely."**
Translation: This will probably only happen over my dead body.

- **"#Woke"**
Translation: My opinion is fact and your facts are opinions.

- **"I'm gonna do me."**
Translation: Fuck you and everything you stand for—now get the fuck outta my way.

- **"#Winning"**
Translation: If I don't distract myself with constantly keeping score, I might cry.

- **"Living my best life."**
Translation: Something amazing happened to me today and I'd like to rub your lousy nose in it.

- **"#Amazing"**
Translation: This was fine.

- **"You're being aggressive."**
Translation: I don't agree with what you're saying but I can't think of a counterargument.

- **"#Blessed"**
Translation: I'm trying to come off as spiritual because saying "I'm so lucky" sounds gross.

- **"Respect my boundaries."**
Translation: Please speak only in a fashion that I am accustomed to and fully approve of.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / BY ALPHASPIRIT

IT'S ONE THING TO LOSE FAITH IN OUR INSTITUTIONS, CORPORATIONS, AND BELIEFS, BUT ONCE HOPE IS LOST FOR LANGUAGE, THE END IS AROUND THE CORNER.

- **"I can't even…"**

Translation: Why isn't the entire universe catering strictly to my sole wants and needs?

- **"#NoFilter"**

Translation: Be jealous of how pretty I am or at least my sickening level of self-esteem.

- **"LOL"**

Translation: Your attempt at humor has been recognized, even though it didn't even cause me to smirk.

- **"Can't wait!"**

Translation: Honestly, I have nothing better going on.

- **"#Cancelled"**

Translation: I like to pretend people are TV shows and I'm a TV executive and I get to put a stop to them if I feel like it.

And finally…

- **"I'm a conservative."**

Translation: I need you to listen to me, but also not pay attention to what I'm actually saying, while acting as if you listened and totally agree.

- **"I'm a liberal."**

Translation: I should warn you, despite my claims of being centered and level-headed, I'm extremely prone to explosive temper tantrums.

The translations of those last two expressions carry the most weight for me. I appreciate the ones that proceeded them, but, outside of scorning emotions, they're basically harmless. The way this concept applies to conservatives and liberals is the red flag.

As we continue to decay into a nation of church parents and teenagers—one group hollering, "Because I said so!" and the other reacting purely with emotion—it's apparent our words carry less and less meaning with every passing day. We continue to warp and misuse our words, mostly out of spite, while remaining split in two, right down the middle, everybody screaming, nobody considering the gray area.

The thick-headed elders don't get "these kids today," and these kids are too spoiled and bratty to stop and listen. Your only hope is to be a rational spectator. That way you'll more likely be prepared to run for the hills and take cover when the shit hits the fan.

It's one thing to lose faith in our institutions, corporations, and beliefs, but once hope is lost for language, the end is around the corner. So don't get involved. You're better off becoming a weird, grizzled hill person. It probably won't be so bad out there in the bush.

As for me? I'm an untrusting man in what I consider to be an untrustworthy world. As this chaos unfolds, I won't be too disappointed, just thankful that a long practice of anti-optimism has me witnessing not the fall of what I once thought to be great, but the exposure of the mess I always knew it to be. The world's subtext, if you will.

I've always thought everything sucked. But who cares? Because I decided long before 13 months ago that you let me down.

Joe DeRosa is an L.A.-based comedian, writer, director, and actor ("Better Call Saul" and "Louie"). His multiple stand-up specials and albums can be found online, as well as his podcasts We'll See You in Hell and Emotional Hangs.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

WHEN I was a young adult, it seemed like I was bombarded with messages that sex with one person was boring. Promiscuity and casual hookups were celebrated, while long-term monogamy was seen as lame. I tried to fit in with my peers, casually fucking my way through college.

One-night stands and short-term relationships blur together in my memories now, but it was basically years of strangers fumbling to find my clit if I was lucky, or essentially using me as a human sex doll on the unluckier days. I never once got off during one of those random hookups, but I faked it dozens of times just to get them to finish. I thought there was something wrong with me.

But it turns out there's nothing wrong with me—I'd just never stopped to question whether I was into women or men.

I grew up in an area where it was fine for people to be gay. It just had never crossed my mind that I might actually be one of them.

Of all people, it was my older brother's best friend, Delilah, who opened my eyes. I was home for the summer, and she regularly came over to hang out by the pool with him. I often admired the way Delilah's yellow bathing suit clung to the round curves of her ass or was scandalized by the way I could see her hard nipples when her top was wet, but it took me a while to realize I wasn't just looking, I was getting turned-on. I was deeply confused by my reaction, and instead of stopping to work through it, I decided I was just sex-deprived and went on a date with a friend of a friend hoping to take the edge off.

The date was fine, he was a nice enough guy, and we ended up back at my place afterward. Delilah and my brother were there, too, so we all ended up drinking margaritas and enjoying the balmy nighttime air by the pool. We got a little carried away with the drinks, and by the time we moved things inside, the guys had both fallen asleep.

Delilah giggled as she pointed to them both snoring on the couch. Without saying anything, she crawled across the floor to me and climbed under my blanket.

What the fuck was going on?

"What are you doing?" I whispered frantically.

"What you've been wanting me to do all summer," she murmured into my ear.

We were both drunk, but it suddenly made sense. I wanted her like I'd never wanted anyone.

She slid her hand under my shirt and I stiffened at the contact, but I quickly relaxed into her touch as she cupped my breast. When she started to tease my nipple, I worked my hands under her shirt and did the same. This started a drunken game of follow the leader, where she would touch me somewhere and I would do the same thing back to her.

I WAS SCARED SHE WAS GOING TO TRY TO FIST ME, BUT ALSO SCARED SHE WAS GOING TO STOP.

Delilah kissed my neck and I pressed my lips to hers just the same way. She teased my nipple with her teeth, and I tried to mimic the erotic scrape with my own teeth grazing against her nipple.

My heart was racing, and I was the wettest I'd ever been. I was mortified, but didn't stop her when she pushed her hand under the waistband of my yoga pants and into my panties, working lower until she found the evidence of my arousal. She moaned as though I had touched her, and I let out an audible groan as well when her finger found my clit. I was so caught up in the intensity of it that I nearly forgot our little game, but when I remembered, I was suddenly desperate to know whether she was as turned-on as me.

For the first time, I touched another woman's pussy and melted at the feel of her wetness. That arousal was for me. She was hot and slick and swollen because of my touch. It was thrilling and I wanted more. She must have felt the same because she pulled me to the floor, stripping out of her tiny shorts and thong, so I did the same. She pulled the blanket down on top of us, so the boys wouldn't see anything if they woke up.

I felt strangely vulnerable being bare from the waist down with her, but quickly forgot when she lay down next to me, spread my legs a little, and started to stroke my clit again. I tried to continue our game, but she stopped me and whispered, "Just let me make you feel good. You can touch me next time." I was nervous and didn't know what to do with my hands, but I stopped worrying about it when she rubbed harder and faster, touching me just the way I touched myself.

She used her other hand to slide two fingers inside me, and that was all it took for me to come. I covered my mouth with my own hand to keep from crying out.

She slid down under the blanket and pushed my thighs wider apart, replacing her finger on my clit with her tongue. She worked a third finger inside me and I came again when I felt the pressure of her spreading me so wide.

I thought she would stop there, but she kept pushing, working her other finger inside me. I was scared she was going to try to fist me, but also scared she was going to stop. It hurt, but it felt so good and no one had ever worked my clit the way she was doing with her tongue.

When I came again, it was an explosion of pleasure the likes of which I had never experienced before, and I soaked the carpet as I squirted for the very first time.

"I didn't even know I could squirt," I panted, feeling too good to be embarrassed.

"I'm sure there are lots of things I can show you. Will you let me?" she asked, looking vulnerable for the first time.

"You could start by showing me how to return the favor," I teased, and she grinned in delight. "But maybe we should move to my bedroom first!"

—Elizabeth D., Cleveland, Ohio

PEACH STATE TRIO

WHEN I proposed to my wife a few years ago, the months that followed were a whirlwind of wedding-related activities. Most of it sucked. I didn't give a shit what we served for dinner or which song we picked for our wedding dance. I cared even less about what flowers we'd choose or what color the cake frosting would be. The whole thing grew into this giant monster that neither of us had imagined when we first thought about getting married, but there didn't seem to be a way to tone it down once it had started.

Since we were asking everyone to travel for the wedding, we decided not to do separate bachelor and bachelorette parties so people didn't have to travel twice. Neither of us was disappointed not to have the classic Vegas-style "last night of freedom," with too many drinks and lap dances, but we did feel like we should be doing something special to mark the occasion, even if it was just for us.

We deliberated over what to do, but our pondering usually devolved from a civilized discussion into dirty talk, followed by foreplay and eventually sex. This entertaining of various ways to celebrate instead of having parties lit a fire in our sex life. It made it okay to throw anything on the table as a fantasy because we were both doing it, plus there was an air of fiction to it all. Surely, we wouldn't ever actually try any of it…would we?

On one such evening, we started tossing ideas around at the kitchen table after dinner.

"We could get tattoos," I suggested with an eyebrow waggle.

"Tacky," she laughed, knowing I wasn't serious.

"We could finally try anal," I said, this time only partially teasing.

"Let's do it!" she said enthusiastically.

"Seriously?"

"Totally. If you want to take it in the ass, I'm down to try it. We could even go strap-on shopping together!"

I grinned and rolled my eyes. She knew that's not what I meant, just like I knew she had no interest in trying anal.

"What if we had sex in public?" she suggested.

She seemed serious, so I contemplated my answer. This was one that sounded really hot to talk about, but I wasn't interested in trying it in real life. That didn't mean we couldn't dirty-talk our way through the fantasy, though.

"Where in public would I fuck you? Maybe the pool?" I asked.

"The hot tub at the pool? We could

MY WIFE-TO-BE WAS NOW STANDING IN FRONT OF ME NAKED, AND MY BEST FRIEND WAS SITTING NEXT TO ME ON THE COUCH, LUSTING AFTER HER.

be doing anything and people might suspect, but they wouldn't know for sure. You could push my bathing suit to the side and fuck me right there in the water where anyone could see."

We started kissing at the table, sliding our hands over each other's bodies.

I murmured in her ear, "Or it doesn't have to be in front of a whole crowd. We could just involve one other person…try a threesome to celebrate us becoming a twosome?"

From the naughty glint in her eyes, I could tell I had hit on a real fantasy. I slid my hand into her shorts and under her panties, exploring with my fingers until I found the spot that made her gasp.

She sounded breathless when she said, "But babe, I feel so bad that you're missing out on the whole stripper bachelor party thing. What if I was the stripper for you?"

"You mean for me and a friend? A bachelor party has to have a friend."

She smirked. "Okay, I could be the stripper for you and…maybe Jason?"

"Not what I expected you to say, but I could get behind that."

"For now, you should get behind me," she moaned, getting wetter on my fingers as I kept rubbing her pussy and clit.

I bent her over the bench at the kitchen table and pulled her shorts down. Her sweet ass jiggled as I spread her cheeks and thrust into her pussy.

As I plunged balls-deep into my fiancée, it seemed like we finally had a plan. But did this mean she was just going to strip for us? Or would we both get to fuck her? Or maybe I would fuck her while Jason watched?

We were young and had never experimented before, so we didn't work through all the ground rules before the big night. We talked about STDs and

birth control, but I didn't want to kill the mood by trying to plan it all ahead of time. She didn't bring it up, either, so I figured we were on the same page and would work it out that night.

When the night of my "bachelor party" finally arrived, Jason and I sat in the living room drinking beers while Lauren finished getting ready upstairs. I had no idea what she was going to wear or do when she came down. I thought if we followed her lead, it would all be fine. I didn't realize that once you're incredibly turned-on, those lines could get a little more flexible than they might have been with a clear head.

The doorbell rang and I jumped up to answer it. This could get awkward if someone had come over unexpectedly.

I opened the door to find my fiancée standing there in a trench coat.

"Is someone not feeling well?" she asked innocently. "I'm a house-call nurse and was sent here to check someone out."

She gave me a devilish smile as she pulled the sides of her coat open to reveal a naughty nurse costume underneath, along with sky-high platform heels.

"Come on in and check us out for yourselves," I said, grabbing a handful of her ass as she passed me and strode confidently into the living room where Jason was still seated.

I had expected her to be nervous or timid at first, but she seemed to be in her element and ready to go. It was a side of her I had never seen before, and I liked it. Once again I thought, *I'm so fucking lucky to be marrying this woman*.

I followed her into the living room, where she pushed me down onto the couch next to Jason.

She pulled out her phone and turned on the music app to play something sultry, then she tossed it onto the end table and began to sway and move. When the music changed to a faster beat, she started twisting her hips in time and running her hands along her body.

Lauren dropped to the floor and began humping and thrusting and gyrating, her curves bouncing deliciously. She crawled toward us and slithered onto Jason's lap, grinding against him and pressing her breasts against his face. I could tell he wanted to grab them, but he resisted like a gentleman, waiting to be invited before touching. Picking him as our guest star had been a good choice.

She gave him an impressive lap dance before sliding over to me and repeating the performance. Jason and I were both rock-hard by the end of the first song.

When the next one started, she stood back up in the center of the room and kept dancing, but slowly unzipped the front of her little white nurse dress. Once it was completely unzipped, she let it drop to the floor. She was now wearing a teeny white thong and a little bra made up of tiny white triangles that barely contained her full breasts.

Lauren continued dancing, almost like she was working up the nerve to take off the rest of her outfit. Then she suddenly yanked off her bra and panties. My wife-to-be was now standing in front of me naked and my best friend was sitting next to me on the couch lusting after her.

I was glad I wasn't jealous so far. It was hot knowing she could choose to share parts of herself with him, but that she would be mine forever.

The next few minutes were a blur of kissing and touching and tongues. She returned to Jason's lap with her back to him, so I moved her legs over his to spread them open. I got on the ground in front of her and licked her cunt until she was thrusting against my face. I flicked my tongue across her clit, shoving my fingers into her, making her squirt all over my tongue.

Jason reached around and took over rubbing her clit, while I took off my pants and boxers. Lauren spread her legs even wider when she saw what I was doing,

I COULD FEEL JASON'S HAND RUBBING HER CLIT AS I FUCKED HER IN SLOW, DEEP STROKES.

letting me nudge the head of my dick inside her. She reached around behind her and I assumed she was stroking Jason's cock from the way he groaned.

I thrust all the way in, then fucked her in slow, deep strokes. I felt a moment of awkwardness at how close I was to Jason and how I could feel his hand rubbing her clit when I pressed all the way forward. It was such a novel, taboo feeling that I didn't last long, coming as she reached her fourth orgasm.

I cleaned her up a little, but Jason didn't seem worried about taking sloppy seconds. We didn't even bother turning her around. Instead, she just lifted up and slid back onto his waiting cock. He plunged inside her, and just like that, I was watching another dude fuck my fiancée. I sat back and watched at first, then leaned forward and licked her clit some more. She was mindlessly thrusting against him, showing no sign of insecurity or hesitation.

Jason managed to hold on long enough for her to come again, and then he did the same, jerking as he finished inside her. Watching my friend pull out of my deeply satisfied wife-to-be was a hell of a way to celebrate our forthcoming nuptials.

—Craig B., Aiken, Georgia

REDECORATING

THE internet would have us believe that it takes naughty lingerie or fancy sex toys to spice up your marriage, but the biggest boost to my wife's and my sex life came in the form of a new piece of furniture. It wasn't that our sex life was bad. We did the deed regularly and we both got off every time.

It was more like we had gotten too good at it. We both knew exactly how the other liked it and what they needed to get

off, so we had become way too efficient. It was sort of like masturbating with another person—it felt good, but the thrill of *fucking* just wasn't there anymore.

Enter our new ottoman. We'd bought an overpriced furniture-store chair a few years before, and one day my wife, Jane, randomly decided it would be better with a matching ottoman. She asked if I wanted to look at it online first, but I smiled and nodded, only half listening to her, and told her to order whatever she wanted.

When it showed up, our new ottoman was a massive square clunky thing that dominated the living room—not at all like the small footrest I had pictured when she told me about it. I hated it

"I think we should take it back," I told her, mentally noting that our conversations had become ruthlessly efficient as well. We didn't sugarcoat things with one another anymore.

"I like it," she countered, flopping down to sit on it.

"It's bigger than the chair it's supposed to go with!"

"Well, technically, it's meant for a couch, but I thought it would be nice to have another place to sit as well as a footrest," Jane said.

Is there anything less sexy than discussing furniture?

Just as that thought entered my mind, a funny thing happened. Jane lay back across the ottoman, perhaps trying to illustrate how comfortable it was. Seeing her splayed out in a sundress, with her legs parted just a little, in the middle of the living room, struck me as somehow indecent. It was like a shot of adrenaline directly to my dick.

Jane was still saying something about the best way to configure a living room, but I was now single-mindedly focused on getting her panties off. I nodded at whatever she was saying, but moved closer, fantasies of fucking my wife sprawled across the ridiculously huge ottoman now consuming my thoughts.

I stood between her legs, pushing them wider apart before dropping down to my knees in front of her. She must have thought I was simply getting a better look at the ottoman because she jolted in surprise when I slid my hands up between her thighs and under her dress. I rubbed her clit and pussy over the soft fabric of her panties, delighting in how quickly a wet spot began to form.

I SPREAD HER CHEEKS APART AND GOT A GOOD LOOK AT HER WET PUSSY BEFORE DRIVING MY DICK INTO HER.

She tried to sit up, but I nudged her back down, not nearly ready to move on to other things. I was enjoying this and wanted to take my time for once.

I slowly peeled her panties off, sliding them down her legs and letting them drop to the floor. I spread her legs wider, taking a second to appreciate the sight of her perfect pussy, bare and wet for me.

I leaned forward, and, as I suspected, the ottoman was the perfect height for me to comfortably lick her pussy—which was good because I planned to be there for a while. When my tongue made contact with her clit, she whimpered and tensed before relaxing into me and moaning as I found a stroking rhythm against her most sensitive spot.

It took a few minutes, but she came with my mouth at her pussy, pressing her thighs together around my head and arching her back at the intensity of the orgasm. She tried to sit up again, but I coaxed her to lie back down with one hand, not bothering to lift my tongue from her pussy.

After three more orgasms, Jane had pulled her feet up to brace them against the ottoman, giving me better access, and she was no longer making any effort to get up. I slowly rose to my knees and was delighted to find her limp with pleasure, cheeks flushed and dress bunched around her waist. The ottoman was huge, but not quite wide enough, so her head hung over the edge. Inspiration struck again.

I dropped my shorts and underwear, letting my rock-hard dick spring loose. She watched me with a naughty gleam in her eyes as I circled around to the other side of our new piece of furniture. She knew exactly what I was going to do and licked her lips before opening her mouth wide in invitation.

I pushed my cock into her mouth, savoring the wet heat and the tight pressure of her lips. I thrust forward, and could feel her tongue stroking the base of my shaft. As I slid in and out a few times, I decided the ottoman was the perfect height for this as well. With her head tilted back over the edge, she was relaxed and her throat was wide-open for me.

I thrust forward a little deeper, hesitating as she gagged a little, but she reached up to pull me forward again. I didn't think I'd ever been this deep in her throat before, and it was fucking amazing. Her throat was squeezing the head of my cock as she cupped my balls, holding me there like she was actually enjoying me face-fucking her. Jane's blowjobs were usually so polite and tidy. Nothing to complain about, but they had nothing on the raw intensity that she was unleashing now. She was gasping and choking, but never let me pull back.

Jane was going to make me come in her throat, but I wanted to be buried in her sweet pussy when I got off, so I pushed her hands away and flipped her onto all fours with her ass facing me. I spread her cheeks apart and got a good look at her wet pussy before parting her folds and driving my dick into her.

I wanted to keep going, but I came after four deep thrusts, teasing her ass with my thumb as I immediately began to fantasize about what else we could do right here in the middle of the living room.

"Still want to take it back?" she asked breathlessly, laughter in her voice.

I slapped her ass playfully and said, "It'll be hard to return now that you got come all over it!"

We grabbed my shorts and cleaned up the mess, and to this day we have our best sex on that ottoman.

Michael W., Arlington, Virginia

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